

THE ROYAL ARTIST MAHENDRAVARMAN I

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Indeed no country in the world rose to the pinnacle of self-eminence which had not Art as the real force prompting its growth and civilisation. And the "glory that was Ind" is revealed to a remarkable degree in its best light by a few relics of her ancient treasures that have luckily come down to us. And in the not long list of illustrious South Indian monarchs, whose deeds have illumined the pages of India's annals, few there are that have better earned a niche in the temple of fame and a place in the hearts of their countrymen by their patronage of Art than the accomplished artist, the intrepid architect, and the highly cultured poet, musician and dramatist, Mahendravarman I.

Mahendravarman, like Harsavardhana of Kanauj was a man of considerable talents and rare gifts. What we call Pallava art to-day and ~~admire~~ so much received a cultural background and flowered under the direct patronage of this royal connoisseur. There was not a single branch of art that was not given a stimulus, not a single monument that was not beautified and immortalised. Surely that veteran archaeologist Prof. Jouveau Dubreuil is giving a true estimate of the king when he says that "King Mahendravarman I is one of the greatest figures in the history of TAMILIAN civilisation".²

Though much is not known about his military exploits and though consequently he would appear to be less fortunate than his father Simhaviṣṇu in war he deserves the encomium given him by Prof. Dubreuil for, it was he who gave a stimulus to, if not actually introduced into the regions under his sway, the love of art. The fine arts received at his hands special attention, and no architectural monument has as yet been discovered in the Tamil

1. Paper read at the First Bombay Historical Congress, December, 1931.

2. Jouveau Dubreuil, *The Pallavas*, p. 40.

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country that can be attributed to a period earlier than his reign. The earlier temples and monuments must have been built of perishable materials like wood, brick, etc. Hence are scarcely found to-day remains of such perishable buildings. The idea of cutting temples and shrines and *caillyas* in solid rock had not evidently spread to the Tamil land at the time that witnessed the growth of rock-cut shrines and cave-temples such as at Ajañtā in the Deccan.

We shall examine the contributions of this royal artist to South Indian Art under the following heads :—

- (1) Architecture and sculpture.
- (2) Fine Arts :
 - (a) Painting.
 - (b) Music.
- (3) Literature (poetry, drama etc.)

Architecture and sculpture.

The very interesting cave-temple inscription of Mahendravarman from Mañḍagapaṭṭu (South Arcot district) introduces us to probably the earliest of the cave-temples designed by Mahendravarman himself in South India. The inscription runs as follows :—

Etad-anīṣṭakamadrumamalohamasudhañ Vicitracittena |
Nirmmāpitan-nṛpeṇa Brahmeśvara-viṣṇu-lakṣitāyatanam ||
“ This is the temple caused to be built by king Vicitracitta
(the curious-minded) for the Trimūrti, *i.e.*, Brahmā,
Īśvara (Śiva), and Viṣṇu—a structure designed with-
out (the use of) bricks, timber, metals, and mortar ”.

The term “ Vicitra-citta ” which has been translated as “ inventive-minded one ” or “ curious-minded one ” would lay emphasis on the fact that Mahendravarman took the initiative in the matter and gave orders for the construction of the rock-cut temple at Mañḍagapaṭṭu. The king claims, as Dr. Jouveau Dubreuil points out in his “ Conjeevaram Inscription of Mahendravarman I ”, the right of authorship of this cave-temple by insisting on two points, *viz.*, “ that the act of digging in a rock was a curious and entirely new idea ” and “ that it was he who gave this idea to the workmen of that region, for it is he and not the workmen who was “ curious-minded ” ”. To our mind the term ‘ vicitra-citta ’ signifies something more too. It is indicative of the rather cold reception that his architectural ideas met

with at the hands of the architects of the Tamil land to whom his invention appeared new and curious, amounting almost to a cynical disregard of the then-known conventions in architecture and temple-building. While they would have driven out of the land any ordinary mason that came to their country with such an architectural invention, so opposed to the process well known to them, they could not but submit to the wishes of the king of the land when he was similarly disposed. They probably yielded to the king under protest, expressing their opposition to the invention probably at the king's back and bemoaning their lot to serve a master who wanted them to learn some new and curious methods in architecture that ran contrary to their experience in that field. Thus the king's ideas were all curious and funny (*vicitra*) to them, and the king himself, (who had probably in his mind several other similar ideas that he must needs put into action,) a "vicitra-citta". Surely their murmured protest reached the ears of the king, who with good humour, prompted by the artistic instinct in him, took upon himself the term 'vicitra-citta' as an honorific title and probably announced to the architects of the land his determination to remain a 'vicitra-citta' till they could get to appreciate his inventions. We can suspect in this action of the king a stealthy attempt to win the confidence of the architects, to alleviate their fears, so that they can combine with him and ensure success for his invention. This step of his had the desired effect as proved by a number of cave-temples rising in quick succession in various parts of the land that were under his sway. Probably the first cave-temple that was built by his unwilling architects under protest was the one at Maṇḍaga-paṭṭu, where to alleviate their fears and to make them take to his work with all willingness he had recourse to the strategm suggested above. And this hilarious royal architect has luckily given us an opportunity to follow his artistic tendencies coupled with good humour by engraving this name "vicitra-citta" on the very temple and immortalising thereby the first phase in his architectural and artistic career.

This inscription besides proving that the king was personally responsible for introducing the "cave style", probably from the north, throws light on the nature of the earlier temples, *viz.*, that structural temples of "bricks, timber, metals (nails), and mortar" were the rule, rather than the exception in the Pallava country.

At the epoch of Mahendravarman there existed structural temples built of the above mentioned perishable materials which

had evidently fallen into ruins and had been destroyed "either by time or by men". While their destruction by time is easily understood their destruction by men requires elucidation. There is a maṇḍapa, now in utter ruins, in the Ēkāmrānātha temple at Kāñcīpuram, the Pallava capital, called the "purāṇa-maṇḍapa" which is attached to the thousand pillared maṇḍapa in the same temple. Many of its pillars are in the Pallava style and were evidently taken from a very ancient temple that had fallen into ruins before they were utilised in the building of this maṇḍapa. The credit of discovering this structure goes to Dr. Jouveau Dubreuil, who examined every nook and corner of Kāñcīpuram before he came across this ruined maṇḍapa. He came across a "facade formed of six pillars which are all probably of Pallava origin. They are cubical, except in the middle where they are prismatic, and adorned with lotus flowers. Only one of these pillars contains an inscription. This pillar is similar to those found in the caves of Mahendra, but does not contain lotus flower ornament; the upper part is cubical and on each of the four sides there are writings". These writings reveal a series of *birudas* of the king himself. Such are for instance, "Abhimukha, Citrakārapuli, Kūṟṟambu, Mahāmegha, Dṛḍhagatiḥ, Pisu (ḍu)gu, Vambara and Bhrāntaḥ." After "Bhrāntaḥ" occurs the verb "akari (akāri)¹" thereby meaning that "the mad man or one out of his senses caused it to be made". Does this not recall our observations under the term "*vicitra-citta*"? From among the *birudas* in the Kāñcīpuram temple if we single out a few and arrange them as, "Abhimukha, Dṛḍhagatiḥ, Bhrāntaḥ Akāri¹, and Citrakārapuli" we arrive at their real import as probably intended by the king himself, their engraver. They give room for the conjecture that the advancing royal artist who wanted to realise his ambition and was consequently of unswerving and persevering gait (*i.e.*, he did not give way before opposition) made the architects of the Tamil land carry his ideas into action for which he was rewarded at the outset with the title "mad or one out of senses" (*bhrāntaḥ*) by an unsympathetic Tamil architect-world. But ere long his ideas were appreciated and admiration for his superior artistic taste followed with the result that "those that came to scoff began to pray". The very architects that reviled him as a funny man and characterised his works as those of a lunatic now joined together in hailing him as "the tiger

1. Read 'akarot'

among artists" (citrakārapuli). This was indeed Mahendra's glorious ambition and he did live to realise his ambition and to witness the dawn of an artistic renaissance.

Let us now determine the character of this "cave style" or the "Mahendra style" as it is more popularly called, for propagating which the royal artist took so much pains. It is assigned to a period ranging from 600 to 625 A. D. and is attributed the following distinguishing characteristics :—

1. The pillars of rock-cut caves are square in section, adorned with lotus flowers with the central portion octagonal.
2. The capitals or "brackets" over these pillars are mostly plain, sometimes with horizontal fluting.
3. There are *Dvārapālas*, always in front view, leaning on heavy clubs, their hands raised sometimes to the head in sign of adoration.
4. Over the architrave there is a convex roll-cornice, decorated with *cāitya*-window niches called *kūḍu*, enclosing heads, the crest of the arch being plain.
5. The Buddhist railing, which is rare in Hindu art, is sometimes seen.¹

The cave-temples attributable to Mahendravarman, that have been discovered up till now are as many as thirteen and are spread all over his kingdom, from the region of the Kṛṣṇā to that of the Kāverī. They are from Uṇḍavalli, Bhairavakoṇḍa, Mahendravāḍi, Pallāvaram, Kāñcīpuram, Māmaṇḍūr, Maṇḍaga-paṭṭu, Dalavānūr, Vallam, Śīyamaṅgalam, Trichinopoly, Sittanṇavāśal and Kuḍumiyāmalai. For a detailed description of these the reader is referred to the works of Dr. Jouveau Dubreuil and Mr. Longhurst on the subject. For our study we shall single out such as throw light on the subject on hand.

Dr. Jouveau Dubreuil has answered the question, "Where did Mahendravarman acquire his taste for rock-cut temples?" in his work² and has come to the conclusion that "it was on the banks of the Kṛṣṇā, when admiring the caves of Uṇḍavalli, Bezvada and Mogulrāzapuram that Mahendra entertained the idea of spreading in the Tamil country the mode of cutting temples in rocks³", and that therefore these temples "appeared as

1. Trichinopoly—Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture*, Part I, Plate I.

2. *Pallavas*, p. 28.

3. *Conjeevaram Inscription of Mahendravarman I*, p. vii.

a new and curious method imported from the Telugu country into the Tamil country by the king who has deserved worthily the name of Vicitracitta "1. While the Doctor assigns the Uṇḍavalli caves to the Viṣṇukunḍins for the reason that they should be the work of some others to have inspired him and to have served as the model for his rock-cut temples further south, Mr. Longhurst assigns them to Mahendra himself. We agree with the latter as the Uṇḍavalli caves are in the same style as those further south, presenting the following common features :—

1. The plan of the caves is the same.
2. The pillars are square in section and have cubical parts ornamented with lotus flowers.
3. The sculptures resemble each other closely.
4. The *Dvārapālas* have the same pose.
5. The doors and the niches have a kind of frame-work which is similar to what is described as "double-arched tiruvāṭchi" found in some of the cave-temples of the south.

We are indebted, however, to Dr. Dubreuil for the very interesting information regarding the parentage of Mahendrarvarman that he has given us while discussing the authorship of the Uṇḍavalli caves. The name Mahendrarvarman which reminds one of the Viṣṇukunḍin name Vikramahendra, was unknown to the Pallavas prior to our king of that name. Śimhaviṣṇu, the father of Mahendrarvarman had conquered the Coḷa country and was ruling over the vast region extending from the river Kṛṣṇā to the Kāverī. While Śimhaviṣṇu was ruling at Kāñcīpuram, the capital of the kingdom, his son, the *yuvārāja* Mahendrarvarman was probably appointed to govern the northern regions with his headquarters in the Kṛṣṇā region. His neighbours were probably the Viṣṇukunḍins who were well disposed to him and taught him what they knew in architecture which they had themselves imbibed from the Vākatakas with whom they were matrimonially allied. Dr. Dubreuil accounts for this happy relation between the Pallava and the Viṣṇukunḍin by assuming a similar matrimonial alliance between them. He says that a Viṣṇukunḍi princess should have been espoused by Śimhaviṣṇu and Mahendrarvarman was probably born to them. The name Mahendrarvarman descended then from his maternal grandfather who was probably Vikramahendra.² On the death of

1. *Conjeevaram Inscription of Mahendrarvarman I*, p. viii.

2. *Pallavas*, p. 35.

his father, Mahendravarman should have moved to Kāñcīpuram and carried with him the lessons in art and architecture that he had learnt in the Telugu country. The Telugu nature of some of his *birudas* found in the cave temples, viz., *nīlvulē nēyambu*, *ventu-lavittu*, *civibhunduṇḍu*, *paśarambu* bears testimony to the fact that he did rule over the country lying to the north of the modern town of Nellore. There is also an inscription of this king in the Kapoteśvara temple, at Chezarla in the Guntur District, which as we know, is modelled on a Buddhist *caitya*, in which he is referred to by the name Mahendravikrama Mahārāja and also by his *birudas* *guṇabhara* and *avanibhājana*.¹ The presence of an inscription of this king here proves his stay in the Telugu country.

We shall now turn to such of the cave temples as reveal the artistic touch of the royal architect.

I. Mahendravāḍi.

Mahitatamaṁ Satām-upamahendra-taṭākamidam
Sthiramuru-kāritam Guṇabhareṇa vidāryya śilām|
Jananayanābhiraṁagunadhāma-Mahendrapure
Mahati Mahendraviṣṇugṛhanāma Murārigṛham ||

“Splitting the rock, Guṇabhara caused to be made on the bank of the Mahendra-tank in the great city of Mahendrapura (also named after the king) this solid, spacious temple of Murāri (Viṣṇu) named Mahendraviṣṇugṛha, which is highly praised by people and which is an abode of beauty pleasing the eyes of men”.

The above is an excellent verse in the Kōkilaka metre and reveals the king's skill in poetry and prosody. We shall pursue the literary career of this king under “Fine Arts”. The king has in this inscription given his name to the place which was then called Mahendrapura and is now known as Mahendravāḍi. So also he has given his name to the rock-cut temple there and to the big tank near which the temple stands.

II. Pallāvaram.

The cave temple here was probably intended for the Trimūrti as at Maṇḍagapaṭṭu and contains a string of *birudas* of the king, some in Sanskrit, a few in Telugu as indicated by their endings and two in Tamil. They are :—

1. S. I. A., Vol. VI, no. 595.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Śrī Mahendravikramah. | 6. Lokaśalyah. |
| 2. Mattavilāsaḥ. | 7. Kalahapriyaḥ. |
| 3. Cetthakārī. | 8. Lalitāṅkurah. |
| 4. Vicitracittah. | 9. Saṅkīrṇajātiḥ. |
| 5. Aluptakāmah. | 10. Pravṛttamātraḥ. |

These are in Sanskrit. Luckily the name of the king is given first thus making the association with him of the following *birudas* obvious. These *birudas* of Mahendravarman are not mere boasts but, as pointed out by the late Mr. Gopinatha Rao, have meanings based upon some act done by him and "have been bestowed on him or assumed by him for some ostensible reason".¹

Matta-vilāsa is probably indicative of the cold reception that his ideas met with at the outset at the hands of the Tamilian architects and artists who were prone to look on them as "the sports of a mad man." We have been so sufficiently tutored to follow the thoughts of this king that it is needless for us to point out that the king took special pride in taking upon himself the names indicative of protest, contempt, etc., by which his people called him, unable to see eye to eye with him in his artistic ambitions. We have seen this under "*vicitra-citta*" while examining Maṇḍagapaṭṭu. Or perhaps this *biruda* is due to his having composed the little pleasant farce, the "*Mattavilāsa-prahasana*" about which more in the sequel.

Cetthakārī.—I examined this *biruda* on the spot and have no reason to disagree with the reading of the Epigraphical department. It is correct and may be taken to be the equivalent of "*Caityakārī*" which would mean that the king was the builder of *caityas*, by which perhaps the monolithic cave-temples are intended.

Vicitracittah.—We have seen this already.

Aluptakāmah.—"One who will not abandon his quests or desires". This can compare with "*abhimukha*" and "*ḍṛḍha-gatiḥ*" of the Conjeevaram inscription and reveals like the latter the king's determination to find support for his ideas and projects from those unsympathetic architects of the Tamil land. Surely Bhavabhūti's cry '*Utpatsyate mama tu ko'pi samānadharmā*' would ring with sincerity and redoubled force if applied to Mahendra.

Lokaśalyah.—"The arrow to the world (the world of foes or the world of the foe-like unsympathetic Tamilian architects)".

Here he is just voicing the feeling of his unsympathetic architects who considered him as a thorn on their side, a veritable menace to the accepted canons and conventions in art and architecture. Surely, the deep lover of art that he was, he considered these architects as his foes and did not mean any foe in the military sense of the term.

Kalahapriyah.—"Lover of fight or dispute". He was eagerly looking forward for a dispute among those unsympathetic architects which, should it occur, would bring some of them to his school and to appreciate his projects. The dispute here refers to a difference of opinion, whether the king's ideas are acceptable or not. By the term *kalaha* no internecine strife is meant, nor any dispute in the real sense of the term but just what we have explained above.

Lalitāṅkuraḥ.—"Of the tender-sprout". That the king belonged to the Pallava family is meant here (*pallava* is a synonym for *aṅkura*). The royal poet gives expression to this idea with singular grace and poetic exaltation that mark him out in all his writings, of which more in the sequel.

Saṅkīrṇajātiḥ.—"The discoverer of a variety of musical time or mode of music known as *saṅkīrṇajāti*". This *biruda* should have puzzled the late Mr. Gopinatha Rao, who not properly realising that these *birudas* of Mahendravarman should not be taken at their face value though he himself agrees that these *birudas* were "bestowed on him or assumed by him for some ostensible reason" has interpreted this term as meaning "mixed caste". In support of this he has to conjecture that "perhaps the parents of Mahendravarman were of different castes". Luckily the late Mr. Krishna Sastri has rescued our Mahendravarman from this ignominy by giving the true interpretation of this term. His words are "Saṅkīrṇajāti is the name of a variety of musical time. Perhaps Mahendravarman I held this *biruda* as an inventor of this method of keeping musical time". We shall speak more of this when we discuss the musical accomplishments of this king under Kuṇḍamīyāmalai. To interpret each *biruda* of this king we should get into the artistic life of Mahendra or in short we should get the "Mahendra spirit".

Pravṛtta (i) mātraḥ.—"Always progressive alone". Here we get an inkling into the real character of the king. He set his goal before him and was always proceeding towards it, each day finding him progressing slowly but surely and nearer his goal.

There was no going back if ills beset him as they did. Like the true warrior whose aim it was "to march ahead and to do and die" he moved ahead in his noble quest of art, paying little heed to the obstacles that befell him and the unsympathetic talk to which his work was made a target, though perhaps at the beginning only.

Now we shall examine the Telugu *birudas*¹ occurring here. They are :—

1. *Civibhundundu*.—Beyond mentioning that it is a Telugu surname of this king no satisfactory interpretation has been forthcoming.

2. *Nilviolnayyambu*.—"The unstoppable friendship". *Nayyambu* is a corruption of *nēyambu* which is itself a corruption of *neśambu* (Skt. *Sneha*)

3. *Ventulavittu*.—Not known.

4. *Pasarambu*.—Not known.

These Telugu names have been adduced by all writers on Pallava history to explain the Telugu origin of the "Mahendra style".

Among Tamil names not many are found here. There are only two and they read as :—

1. *Citrakārapuli*.—"Tiger among artists". Here the king has given the reader an inkling into his ambition and the key to his pursuits. His ambition is to become the foremost among the artists of the land. We can concede either that this title was bestowed on him by those architects who were scoffers to begin with but who subsequently began to appreciate his work, or that it was assumed by him to show his ultimate triumph. If the latter interpretation is accepted then surely it is the ejaculation of a successful artist who on seeing his ideas crowned with success in a manner that he himself probably did not anticipate bursts out in that fashion just as the weary traveller on sight of his goal would speed up to the place with the unconscious and spontaneous cry on his lip "goal". Surely, while engraving this *biruda*, the royal engraver is asking himself, "Am I the *Citrakārapuli* that I strove to be, and have I reached my goal's end after all?"

2. *Pugāpīḍuka* (Pagāpīḍugu).—"The thunderbolt that cannot be split". This term too indicates his triumph and an unshakable determination on the part of the king. Just as the thunderbolt cannot be split so also the king could not be thwarted or

diverted or weaned away from his noble task in the field of art and architecture. The earlier opposition to the king's ideas is easily indicated.

III. *Kāñcīpuram.*

The remains of a structural temple of Mahendravarman have been referred to already. One of its pillars contains the king's *birudas* on its four sides; these are given here in detail :—

Northern side of the pillar.—

Pisu (ḍu) gu, meaning the “thunderbolt”.

Vambara.—This occurs on the fourth pillar (4th line, first word) of the upper cave at Trichinopoly. Its significance is not clear.

Bhrāntaḥ akari, (akarot) i. e., “The mad fellow made”. We have seen the true import of this expression already.

Eastern side—

Cumbu,—Not clear.

Vamkambu.— „

Vnāra.— „

Southern side—

Abhimukha.—Examined already.

Citrakārapuli.— „

Kūṛrambu means “Yama or Death”. This term occurs on the fourth pillar (3rd line, first word) in the upper cave at Trichinopoly.

Western side—

Ema.—Too fragmentary to convey any sense.

Kuvatroṇa ?—Not clear.

Mahāmegha, i. e., the great cloud. Probably the king is compared to a great cloud as he should shower on his subjects wealth and comfort even as the cloud showers rain vouchsafing good harvest.

Dṛdhagatiḥ.—Examined already.

IV. *Māmaṇḍūr.*

The cave temple here resembles closely the cave at Sittanṇavāśal to which we shall come presently, and an inscription found here, though fragmentary, is of great importance to us as it speaks of the literary accomplishments of the king and his contributions in the sphere of painting, dance and music—a fascinating study indeed, which we shall relegate to the section

“Fine Arts”. The inscription which is mostly in anuṣṭubh verses is indeed a record of the glory and the prosperity that attended the king of such an artistic bent of mind.

V. *Maṇḍagaṇaṭṭu.*

Described already.

VI. *Dalavānūr.*

Daṇḍānata-narendreṇa Narendreṇ-aiṣa kāritaḥ |

Śatrumallena śaile-smin Śatrumalleśvarālayaḥ ||

“By the king, the queller of his foes (Śatrumalla), who has humbled inimical kings by his army, has been caused to be built on this hill an abode of the god named Śatrumalleśvara.”

Śatrumalla is another *biruda* of Mahendravarman and occurs at Trichinopoly, Māmaṇḍūr, and Vallam.

VII. *Vallam*

The inscription in this temple is in Tamil and is of importance to the student of history as it speaks of a feudatory of Mahendravarman who appears to have ruled in the vicinity of Chingleput and from whom the later Pallava Ko-Peruñjiṅga appears to have been descended. The temple here was the work of this feudatory who carried out the idea of his liege-lord. Probably Mahendravarman was aided in realising his ambition by this vassal of his. The inscription is spread on two pillars and runs as :

On the left pillar

Pagāppiḍugu Laṭitāṁkuraṇ

On the right pillar.

Śatturummallaṇ Guṇabharaṇ
Mayendirap-pottareśaru aḍiyāṇ
Vayantappiri areśaru magan
Kandasenaṇ śeyivitta Deva-
kulam.

“The temple was caused to be built by Kandasena (Skt. Skandasena), the son of Vayantapriya-rāśa (Skt. Vasantapriya-rāja), who was a vassal of Mayendirappottareśaru (Skt. Mahendrapota-rāja), whose *birudas* are Pagāppiḍugu (*i.e.*, the thunderbolt that cannot be split), Laṭitāṁkura, Śatrumalla and Guṇabhara”.

Of these *birudas* examined already, the last one, Guṇabhara, (the bearer of virtues) occurs in Mahendravāḍi and Trichinopoly also.

VIII. *Śyamaṅgalam.*

An inscription in Sanskrit (Āryā metre) speaks of the construction of this cave-temple by Mahendra who is referred to here by his *birudas* Laṭitāṁkura and Avanibhājana. It reads as :

1. Lalitāṅkureṇa rājñā-Ava-
2. nibhājana-Pallaveśvara-nāma |
3. Kāritam-etat-svedhā (cchā)-karaṇḍa-
4. m-iva puṇyaratnānām ||

"By king Lalitāṅkura ("charming scion") was caused to be made this (temple) named *Avanibhājana-Pallaveśvara*, a casket as it were (worked at his will) and enclosing jewels, viz., good deeds". By this simile the king suggests that he built the temple in order to obtain merit in the future life.

Avanibhājana-Pallaveśvara means 'the Īśvara (Śiva) temple of the Pallava king whose title was *Avanibhājana* ("earth-vessel", i.e., he, whose glory fills the earth). *Avanibhājana* occurs in the *Mattavilāsa-prahasana* written by the king and in the "Chezarla inscription referred to already¹ and at Trichinopoly.

IX. Trichinopoly.—

The inscriptions of Mahendravarman in the cave-temple here are exhaustive and contain much information that will be useful to a student of Pallava history. That part of the inscriptions dealing with the so-called conversion of Mahendra from Jainism to Śaivism, thanks to the famous Śaivite saint Appar and the erection of a temple for Śiva on the hill and the placing of a *liṅga* in it and a portrait of the king himself, is in Sanskrit verses which have been published in *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. I, pp. 29-30. The other part consisting of the *birudas* and other ordinary qualities of the king is supplied by the pillars of the cave. These *birudas* are of diverse origin, most of them in Sanskrit, some in Telugu and some others in Tamil. The name of the king is mentioned as "Mahendravikramaḥ". Then the title "*mattavilāsa*" follows. Among the several other titles and qualities that find place here (both in the verses and in the list of names) mention may be made of the following:—*Saṅkīrṇajāti*, *Lalitāṅkura*, *Guṇabhara* (abundance of virtues), *Satyasaṇḍha* (true) *Puruṣottama* (the best among men), *Śatrumalla*, *Nityavinītaḥ* (ever modest), *Nirapekṣaḥ* (the independent or the self-reliant or the resourceful), *Nilvulēṇēyambu* (Telugu, "the unstoppable friendship") *Anityarāga* (not permanently drawn to pleasures or attachment), *Anumānaḥ* (the sophist or the good logician), *Avanibhājanah* (whose glory fills the earth), *Abhimukhaḥ* (advancing or progressive), *Akaruṇaḥ* (the pitiless probably to his enemies or to vandals), *Alavala* (not clear),

1. S. I. I., Vol. VI, No. 595.

Valampū (Tel. not clear), *Kilampū* (Tel. not clear), *Mlāyu* (Tel. not clear), *Virasaḥ* (void of desire), *Vyavasthitaḥ* (persevering), *Vyavasāyaḥ* (industrious), *Kaḍuntarambu* (Tel. not clear), *Karumpū* (Tel. inimical), *Kūrṛambu* (Yama or Death), *Vambara*, *Nivambu*, (Tel. not clear), *Nayambu* (gentle or gentleness), *Naṛuku* (not clear), *Naiḥikāmutrikaḥ* (not attached to pleasures of this world or of the worlds beyond), *Narāpaśa*, *Vanību*, *Vamkaḥ*, *Kuhakaḥ*, etc.

X. *Śiltanṇavāśal*.—

The rock-cut temple here is identical with that at Māmaṇḍūr. As it has not been figured yet in works of Pallava architecture I attempt to give here a description of its architecture which is luckily simple and elegant. There are the usual four pillars supporting the roof of the cave, two standing in the middle and the other two, those at the ends, being embedded on the side of the cave, so that a portion of each alone projects. The central pillars are square in section with the usual octagonal belt in the centre and support capitals which present horizontal flutings. The capitals support the architrave, a long flat beam, which in turn supports a double flexured cornice. On either side of the cave is a niche in which is seated the figure of a Jaina Tīrthaṅkara carved in high relief, of almost life size. The back wall is divided into symmetrical compartments by ornamental pilasters, in the centre of which a plain entrance into the inner cell is located. A pair of steps flanked by *śuruḷ-yālis* leads to the entrance which opens into a cell, cubical in plan, with plain walls, and showing signs of having been once covered with paintings. On the side opposite to the entrance and facing the latter can be seen three seated figures in a row. These three, together with the two outside on the side-niches, reminding us of the *dvārapālas* in the other cave-temples of the king, are seated in the "saṃpar-yaṅka" pose with the legs crossed and the palms placed on the lap, one over the other—a pose specially prescribed for the Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras. It was Dr. Jouveau Dubreuil that started characterising this cave-temple as Jaina. Though several other writers did not agree with him¹ the fact remains that it was intended for the Jaina gods and that Mahendravarman built that cave-temple for his Jaina subjects. The identification receives support from the following facts :—The Jainas require often

1. *Triveni*, Vol. IV, No. 1, pp. 91—93; Mehta, *Studies in Indian Painting*, p. 11.

such caves for the performance of severe austerities such as the *sallekhanā* (i.e., doing penance, being in meditation and dying slowly by starvation). The place of the *dvārapālas* in this cave is taken by two Tīrthaṅkaras, both cross-legged and in the *yogic* pose. One of them has a curve over his head which may be taken to be the *chatra* or more probably the disc of the moon (*candra-kalā*). If the latter is possible, then the image must be taken to represent Candraprabha, the 8th Tīrthaṅkara. The identity of the other Tīrthaṅkara on the other side of the entrance is very clear. The cross-legged figure in the *yogic* pose has the serpent with five hoods over its head, a feature which marks Pārśvanātha out easily. Though Supārśvanātha, the 7th Tīrthaṅkara, ought also to have this distinguishing mark, the absence of the *svastika* in this case, which as we know is an additional mark required for Supārśvanātha, proves beyond any doubt that Pārśvanātha was alone intended. The three other Tīrthaṅkaras inside the cell remain for the present unidentified, as I have not examined them carefully with a view to find out the *lāñchanas* appropriate to them. But, as they are all in the *sainṣaryaṅka* attitude, with no trace of any kind of drapery or ornament or the *yajñopavīta* on them, a feature shared by the two others outside, we have no hesitation in calling them all Tīrthaṅkaras and the cave itself a Jaina cave. The carving of these sculptures is marvellous for its precision and excellence of anatomy. The figures are natural and carry themselves with a grace though in an erect posture 'like a flame that flickereth not in windless space.'

The surface of the rock inside has been given a finish to suit it for the subsequent fresco-process. "The figures carved are not finished as such, for that was left to the painter's plaster and brush." The cave was intended, even when it was actually carved, to be painted over inside. The paintings must have originally covered the whole of the interior as there are traces of colour to-day on the ceiling, the pillars and their capitals. A description of these paintings will find a suitable place under painting in the section, 'Fine Arts'.

XI. Kuṣumiyāmalai.—

An inscription of the same characters as those found in the other records of Mahendravarman, and in any case dating from the 7th century was discovered at Kuṣumiyāmalai in the Pudukotta state. It was incised on a rock on the slopes of

the hill behind the Śikhānāthasvāmi temple of the place, and at the right end of the sixth and seventh sections of this inscription, the basement of a *maṇḍapa* belonging to an adjoining rock-cut temple called Mēlaikkōvil covered it up so that a few notes in each sub-section together with the words “samāptāḥ svarāgamāḥ” are lost. This inscription is devoted entirely to music and is said to have been engraved at the instance of a king, a disciple of Rudrācārya for the benefit of the pupils. Dr. Jouveau Dubreuil has on sufficiently strong grounds, which we shall examine under ‘Music’, identified this unnamed king with Mahendravarman whom he calls an accomplished musician.

Fine Arts.

(a) *Painting.*

Some faint traces of paint were noticed on the walls of the Māmaṇḍūr cave by Dr. Jouveau Dubreuil who was sorry, however, to note that they yielded no satisfactory result. But the discovery of Pallava painting in the Śittannavāśal cave has made the study of this subject fascinating. It is easy to concede that Mahendra was indeed the lover of painting that he is described to be. The Māmaṇḍūr inscription proves this. As almost all the artistic hobbies and propensities of Mahendra are detailed in this important, though unfortunately fragmentary, record from Māmaṇḍūr, it is given below:—

1. Avinīta-kasamṛddha vṛttamasya vija
gandharvvaśāstra-makhila . . . khilamukhodbhūta.

2. . prājāpatya nā (dbh) āvanāgamanah
pa gandhānā . . . m-Pāñcāla-nirmmita.

3. khya nā ttā (ṣikētuna) . . . manobhirāma
. mam Vālmikivarnṇita . . .

4. Bharatā-nāya(ka) sabhā vatsāpahāra . . . (ri)-
pūṇām vajrasāyakaḥ.

5. ma(kṛta) ndhata-Cēra-Pa mudārā-
rthamurvvaśī-sarvaśobhanā . . .

6. varīṇca Nāṭakam || Vyāsakalpasya m
Bhagavadajjuka syam Mattavilāsādipadam-prahasantamam

7. pūrṇam-prabhṛta samuttejita tuṣṭaya . . .
jayasya-patyaś-Śatrumallasya bhūbhujah |

8. yad-bhramarīvāptasammadāḥ || Yā kavīnām-
prakāśa vatta mprattis-samabuddhiriva sthitā

[9. gurusvaravarṇṇayā purā tasyām kavigirajāsyārttha-
vatām . . . (ā) puṣṇuś-śiṣyatvamēyuṣaḥ.

10. prajñāmatīsamānvitām || Prā . . . ṇōta . . .
jyāyayā svaya . . .

11. . . . kalpāt pravibhajya . . vṛttīm Dakṣiṇacitrākhyam
(kāra) yitvā Yathāvidhi.

12. . . . śca vividhaiḥ kṛtvā varṇṇacaturttha (varṇṇaṇ-
Candrārṇava) | Aprāptapūrvvan-nirvēṣṭum vādyaśravaṇa . . .
kṛlavatīva

13. kaṇṭhaśrutiguṇāvasādhāraṇasaṃpadā | Drṣṭ-
vevōtkarṣaṇena . . . yinī kṣeva

14. yatō viśamvādām Lakṣmyā manōtsukatayā |
Yasyāś-śilaviśeṣa . . yāyata yādattamanna

15. ke . . . kānti yathārtthēna candralekheya yā gatā
gatrīn-dhaha . . ta . . śāstreṣu nityavihitabudha

16. yeṣu parām prīti . . . panta . . sya vapuṣaḥ ||
Nityavinītena Satyasam(dhena) . . . syā bhaktyā-varjjita-
mauḷinā

17. Sahasra . saṃpūrṇamēgha-śyāmasya garji . . vada . .
pati . . vattayā ||

As the inscription is hopelessly fragmentary it is not possible to attempt a translation of the verses that it contains. The utmost that one can obviously make out of them is just the gist or the substance of the whole record. It praises the poetical and the musical talents of the king. In the first line we find mention made of Gandharva-śāstra which means music. In the second line there is a reference to something made in or in vogue in the Pāñcāla country.¹ In the third line some work of Vālmiki (does this merely mean the excellence of Vālmiki as found in his immortal Rāmāyaṇa?) or something described by Vālmiki is mentioned. In the fourth line two terms "sabhā" and "vatsā (vastra) pahāra" give room for a conjecture that there is here probably a reference to some work of the times in which the outrage on the modesty of Draupadī, the heroine of the Mahābhārata by Duśśāsana in the "sabhā" i.e., court-hall, at the instance of Duryodhana formed the main theme. Some support is lent to this assumption by the term "Bharatā-nāyaka" at the beginning of the same line. Probably the expression "Bharatā-nāyaka" needs correction as "Bhārata-nāyaka". Evidently there was then at the time of Mahendravarman a

1. Does this refer to music during puppet-shows (Pāñcā-
likās)?

popular play with the above scene from the Mahābhārata as its main theme which caught the fancy of Mahendra. Lines 5 and 6 probably make mention of a drama written by the king himself, the title of which finishes with the letters “. . . varī” and in which the story of Vikrama and Urvaśī such as is recorded in the immortal play of Kālidāsa, the “Vikramorvaśīya”, formed the main plot. This guess is warranted by the terms “Urvaśī sarvaśobhanā” in the 5th line and “. . . varī” and “nāṭaka” in the 6th line. The 6th line is also important for the valuable information that it gives with regard to the farce, entitled Mattavilāsa, the authorship of which is assigned in the *prastāvanā* of the work itself to Mahendravarman. The terms in this line that require elucidation are “Vyāsakalpasya—Bhagavadajjukasyam Mattavilāsādipadam-prahasānottamam”; these are fragmentary pieces from an *anuṣṭubh* which can be restored as follows:—

“Vyāsakalpasya *bhūpasya kāvyam* (or *sukavēr jetum*)
Bhagavadajjukam |

Hāsyam Mattavilāsādipadam Prahasānottamam ||”

Translation:—

“The farce Bhagavadajjuka is the work of the king who resembles sage Vyāsa himself; (so also) the best among farces that began with the term Mattavilāsa.”

Or

“The best among the farces that began with the term Mattavilāsa (was produced) to eclipse the farce-Bhagavadajjuka which was the work of the great poet who resembled Vyāsa¹.”

This takes us to the question of the relative importance of the two farces, Bhagavadajjuka and Mattavilāsa, the authorship of the former and other points of literary importance which we shall discuss under “Literature”.

Line 7 contains the terms “Śatrumallasya Bhūbhujah” which prove that the king intended here is Mahendravarman whose *biruda* is “Śatrumalla” as examined already. In line 9 reference to musical sounds in the pitch (*guru*) expressed by letters is made. Line 11 is important for it contains the following verse almost restored:—

“ Kalpāt pravibhajya |

Vṛttim Dakṣiṇa-citrākhyam (kāra) yitvā yathāvidhi ||”

1. I am indebted to my Professor, Mahamahopādhyāya S. Kuppuswami Sastriar for this suggestion.

Translation :—"Classifying (the subject) from (an old standard) *kalpa* (*i. e.*, work on the subject) he caused to be compiled a commentary (*vytti*) called *Dakṣiṇa-citra* (*i. e.*, South Indian art or painting) following strictly the methods and the rules laid down for such a work."

It is evident that he analysed the subject of painting that was laid down in an earlier work (*kalpa*) which was probably cumbersome or not clear or which had perhaps to be revised in the light of later inventions in the field. The results of his analysis derived probably from a practical study of the subject he embodied in a treatise which conformed to the rules relating to such compositions and which he named *Dakṣiṇa-citra* or Southern Art or Painting.

Line 12.—If the reading "*varṇacaturtha*" is adopted it would mean that the king was the inventor of a fourth colour in painting. But if the other reading, *viz.*, "*varṇam Candrārṇavam*" is accepted the sense conveyed would be that the king by diverse ways designed a work on colour-process in painting which he named "*Candrārṇava*"

The latter half of line 12 and the first half of line 13 give the following idea :—The king wanted to achieve what was not achieved before in the realm of music. Seeing the various intonations of sounds that stringed musical instruments like the *viṇā* alone could produce and actuated by a zeal and determination to produce the same results in vocal music, he designed, by dint of uncommon and superior resources probably a successful notation of musical sounds to be produced in vocal music. What is suggested here receives confirmation from the *Kuṭūmiyāmalai* inscription on music, which will be treated under "Music". Line 16 gives a few *birudas* of the king that occur at Trichinopoly also. Such are for instance *Nityavinīta* and *Satyasaṁdha*. There is a very interesting *anuṣṭubh* verse between lines 16 and 17 which can be restored as follows :—

Satyasaṁdhena (Rudrasya or Bhargasya or more probably) Sīrṁhasya Bhaktyā-varjjita-maulinā |

Sahasrakotīsaṁpūrṇameghaśyāmasya garjitam ||

"(The mandate) of Rudra or Brahmā or Sīrṁha (*i. e.*, Viṣṇu as Narasiṁha) who is dark like numerous thick clouds was proclaimed (to the world by this inscription) by Satyasaṁdha with his head bent with devotion to the god (*i. e.*, bowing).

The idea indicated here is that the king echoed as it were (*garjita*) the roar of Narasimha that art should be revived in the country in the manner indicated above. The terms "garjita" (*i. e.*, was roared) and "sahasrakotiśampūrṇameghaśyāmasya" make the insertion of "sinihasya" between "Satya-saṁdhena" and "bhaktiā" most appropriate, for a lion alone could roar and the lion in this case is an incarnation of Viṣṇu, whom scriptures describe and praise as "He of colour as dark as the cloud."

While reading this inscription one cannot help noting with regret the present damaged and consequently fragmentary condition of the record which, if it were only intact and well preserved, would have opened a new page in the history of art in South India under Mahendravarman and would have made us realise the import of that immortal title of his found in some of his cave-temples, *viz.*, "Citakāra-puli" *i. e.*, tiger among artists. Now at least let us commune with this "Citakāra-puli" who if he so styled himself did with legitimate pride and deservedly. But if it was bestowed on him as was more probably the case it should have been done by an appreciative grateful artist-world.

Let us turn our attention now to actual painting in the cave-temples of Mahendravarman. We have it on the authority of Dr. Jouveau Dubreuil who visited the Māmaṇḍūr cave as early as 1915-16 that he found traces of paint. When I happened to visit the cave with a view to study the damaged inscription early in 1931, I found very little of these traces and what actually showed appeared to me as of no interest. It was in fact the inscription that rivetted my attention all the time I stayed in the temple. Thus we have to content ourselves with the frescoes at Sittanṇavāśal for our study of the technique in Pallava painting started by the illustrious Mahendra.

Sittanṇavāśal.—

The architecture and sculptural details of this cave-temple have already been narrated. Its painting shall now be examined.

From a verse, "śaiveyam mama citrakarma-racanā bhittim vinā vartate" found in the well-known Sanskrit drama "Mudrā-Rākṣasa" by Viśākhadatta of the 6th century A.D. we get to know that "Bhitti-citra" *i. e.*, wall or fresco-painting was very popular as otherwise it could not have been drawn for literary metaphors. *Citra-lepya-kṛts* or fresco-painters are referred to by poet Rājaśekhara of 900 A.D. as being assigned seats by the side

of poets of Apabhraṃśa language in the court-halls of kings. It would thus appear that they were assigned a high position in society which "is an index of the popularity of the art of painting"¹. *Bhitti-citra* was in fact such a noble hobby of even ruling monarchs that from a few manuscripts, out of a horde of several of them that have luckily escaped destruction we get to appreciate their proficiency in the various branches of learning (*kalā*) more particularly in painting. To those earlier standard works on the subject such as Nārada's, "Sarasvatī and Brahmā", and the "Citra-sūtra" chapters of the "Viṣṇudharmottara" we have to add the later royal contributions such as the Western Cālukya king Someśvara's immortal "Abhilaṣitārtha-cintāmaṇi" dating from the 12th century and the still later or to speak correctly modern "Śivatattva-raṭnākara" compiled from earlier works on the subject by the Kelaḍi chief Basavarāja (1709 A. D.). The 6th *kallola*, 2nd *taraṅga* of the last mentioned work introduces us to "bhitti-citra" in the palace-hall where the king has very ably analysed the subject as follows :—

- vv. 2-74. (1) How to prepare *vajralepa*, pens and brushes for painting.
 (2) Selection of colours to suit different themes.
 (3) Description of natural (original) and artificial (mixed) colours.
 (4) Artificial colour-its ingredients.
 (5) Anatomy of pictures-measurements of the *avayavas* and parts of pictures.
 vv. 75-81. (1) Classification of pictures.
 (2) Places best suited for painting different kinds thereof.
 vv. 82-161. Measurements of pictures in general and of their *avayavas* in particular.

The whole subject is dealt with in 160 verses in a chapter which the author characterises as "Varṇasamyojana, Citra-lekhana, pratimā-lakṣaṇa-nirūpaṇam".

Hāving had a peep into those early *citra-śālās* or picture galleries, thanks to the innumerable literary references attesting to their existence, it is our pleasant task now to examine the fresco-paintings at Sittannavāsāl with a view to find out how best the cave answered the description of a *Citra-śālā* or picture-gallery.

Being the most perishable of the fine arts the painting in this cave has suffered a good deal owing to age and age-long neglect

1. Mehta, *Studies in Indian Painting*, p. 14.

and indifference, darkening of the interior of the cave by smoke from the fire of way-side wandering pilgrims who appear to have cooked their food in, even as they do to-day, the peeling off of the plaster here and there owing of course to neglect and the almost horrible vandalism to which it has been subjected at the hands of cattle-boys, the natives of the soil and the over-zealous Census recorder. This vandalism has been described by Mr. M. S. S. Sarma, who has made beautiful copies of the remaining frescoes (some of which are figured by Mehta in his "*Studies in Indian Painting*") as follows: "... much of what remains intact has been also darkened by smoke from fires lit in the cave by resting *bairāgis*. Balls of dung have been freely hurled at the ceiling; evidently the village urchins must have used the picture on the ceiling as a good target for their balls of dung and clay, which can now be seen sticking here and there! Any attempt to remove them brings away the plaster too, so that they are better left there to tell their tale too. With regard to the very facet of the pillar wherein is located the dancing figure . . . , the delicate brush lines of the master-artist have been marred ruthlessly by the crude brush, probably of the census enumerator whose only paint is black tar, with the result that you find there, in hideous prominence, the figure 165 with something more added on to it¹". Surely the entire cave must have been covered with paintings, for traces of paint are seen everywhere inside the dark cave "as you become more and more familiar with the contents of the cave". Even as in Māmaṇḍūr and at Mahābalipuram² the sculptures in the cave reveal traces of plaster and colour. The credit of discovering these paintings ought strictly to go to the late lamented Gopinatha Rao, who communicated his discovery to his scholar-friend, Dr. Jouveau Dubreuil who forthwith drew the attention of the world by means of a leaflet and an article in the *Indian Antiquary* (Vol. LII, pp. 45-47) with a tracing of the outline of a well-preserved dancing figure. With his remarkable precision in judgment and the instinct of a born archæologist he was able to determine that "—1. The process of Pallava painting is similar to that of the Ajaṇṭā paintings.

2. The painting of the Pallavas was, perhaps, even more beautiful than their sculpture.

1. *Triveni*, Vol. III, No. I., p. 68; Vol. IV, No. I, pp. 94—95.

2. J. Dubreuil, *Pallava Painting*, p. 1.

3. The Śittannavāśal cave is a Jain temple "1. After closely examining the Śittannavāśal paintings and sculptures we have only to conclude that the Professor is remarkably correct in his estimation. The sculptures which represent Tīrthaṅkaras have been already examined. The paintings alone remain.

Before taking to a study of these it is interesting to note that the name of the place, Śittannavāśal is so un-Tamilian that to explain its derivation we have to look to its Sanskrit or Prākṛt form. In Sanskrit it will be "Siddhānām vāsaḥ" *i. e.*, the abode of the *Siddhas* or ascetics and in Prākṛt "Siddhaṇṇa-vāsa". As we know that the Jains and the Buddhists had a special leaning towards Prākṛt culturally we shall take the Prākṛt form as the nucleus of the modern Tamil name of the place, Śittannavāśal. The term "siddha" is of special value to us for our study for we know that the "siddhas" occupy a pre-eminent place in Jaina iconography and worship. Among the *pañca-namaskāras* that every follower of the Jaina faith should make the first *namaskāra* is reserved for the "Siddha". And in Jaina cosmology the highest place or heaven (to use a common and popular term) is spoken of as the *Siddhaloka*, the denizens of which are the *siddhas* or the liberated souls whom even the Tīrthaṅkaras worship prior to initiation (*dīkṣā*).² The Jaina ascetics of the place naturally required solitary places like the cave under discussion for the performance of their austerities and *dhyāna*. The rocky nature of the country afforded them ample cave-resorts, one of which was the one under discussion which was embellished with sculptures and paintings by a royal patron of rare artistic taste, who was probably drawn to the place either because of the sanctity of the place or because of his fervour for the Jaina religion—a point which we relegate for discussion at the end of this paper, while discussing the religion of Mahendra.

Of those paintings of the place that are intact, careful copies have been made by Mr. M.S.S. Sarma of Madras, some of which have been figured by Mehta in his book on "Studies in Indian Painting". I have seen his copies in colour and was struck by their fidelity to the originals. They have been drawn to correct scale and have been properly toned.

1. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. LII, p. 45.

2. This has been dealt with in detail by me in my monograph on Jaina painting, to be published as a volume of the Madras Museum Bulletin.

The plaster serving as the primed ground is very thin, of about an eighth of an inch and has adhered to the surface of the rock so well that it is not easy to remove its traces. Particles of husk and straw can be seen in some places and the lime appears to have been mixed up with fine sifted sand. At Bagh one finds lime mixed up with cow-dung. My friend Mr. Chitra of the Madras School of Arts tells me that the latter mixture would give a suitable ground for the best colour-effect. The colours used are not many ; those used are red, yellow, blue, green, black and white. Mr. M. S. S. Sarma has examined them very carefully and tells me that they are natural colours or "vegetable colours" as the local Tamil painters would call them. A bit of the primed ground furnished by the lime-mixture was tasted by him and found to be sweet. While only one variety in each of black, green, blue and white pigments is found, red and yellow have two varieties each. Red has "red ochre" and "vermilion", and yellow "yellow ochre" and "bright golden".

The colour scheme is harmonious and simple, the colours being well soaked into the surface and given a final polish with probably small prepared pebbles. It is natural, without any elaborate attempt at light and shade. The backgrounds are mostly red or green. The paintings are essentially linear; they "began and ended with outlines, and the boldness and firmness displayed in them are really marvellous", "every form being brought out firmly by its decided outline". It has been supposed that the first outline here must have been done with red ochre as at Ajañtā, an inference which is but natural as, in the case of such paintings, time, exposure, weather and natural decay would tend to obliterate everything else save the red outlines. But according to Mr. M. S. S. Sarma the execution here was different. "The cuncuma (*Kuñkuma*) stem which Indian ladies use even to-day in their toilet is the thing that was used for the preliminary outline. The alkaline nature of the fresh ground converted the yellow of the stem into a rich red colour which was then fixed by outlines of different appropriate colours, thus parcelling out the ground for subsequent coats of colour. The outlines then were emphasised with suitable tints here and there. When the surface moisture is gone, but when the ground is still damp, light shading by hatching and stippling is indulged in, and afterwards, before the ground completely dries up, the whole is given a

polish with small prepared pebbles¹". The linear draughtsman-ship reveals a knowledge of anatomy and perspective far advanced.

The chief decorative *motif* in the whole cave is the lotus with its stalk, leaf and flower. As Dr. Dubreuil has remarked in his "Pallava Painting", "The decoration of the capitals of the two pillars of the facade is well preserved and consists of painted lotuses whose blooming stems intertwine with elegance", the pillars being adorned with the figures of dancing girls. The ceiling of the inner cell reveals a geometrical design, complicated, most of which has been unfortunately obliterated. Of those fragments that are luckily intact and have been copied by Mr. Sarma, that on the ceiling of the verandah is the most interesting. It is located in the centre of the ceiling and is flanked by two simple decorative panels with designs looking like carpets spread. A lotus tank in blossom with fishes, geese and other birds, animals such as buffaloes and bulls and elephants and three men, who are according to Dr. Dubreuil "surely Jains" wading through, gathering lotus flowers, is the subject treated. While the water of the tank alone is treated in a conventional manner the rest is done in a most natural, elegant and simple manner. The fishes and the geese play about in the tank here and there and recall a pleasant paradise. Lotus leaves are made to stand as the background of every lotus flower in bloom. Of the three men, whose pose, colouring and the "sweetness of their countenance are indeed charming" two stand close to each other while the third stands alone at the right hand end of the fresco. The skin of two is dark-red in colour while that of the third is bright yellow or golden.

While both Mehta and Sarma do not agree with Dr. Dubreuil who identifies the scene depicted as "probably from the religious history of the Jains", we are of opinion that the French archaeologist is seldom wrong in his surmises and if he errs at all he errs rather on the right side than on the wrong one. The scene depicted is one of the most attractive heavens that find a place in the "Samavasaraṇa" or heavenly pavilion created by Saudharmendra for the Jina to sit and discourse, the moment that he becomes a "kevali". Seated in the *Gandhakuṭi* within the "Lakṣmīvara-maṇḍapa," which in turn is in the centre of the whole *samavasaraṇa* structure, the Tīrthaṅkara or the Jina holds the divine discourse attended by all pomp. A *divyadhvani*

emanates from Him which is interpreted by the *Gaṇadhara*s, the occupants of the first *koṣṭa*, which is one of the 12 *koṣṭas* surrounding the seat of the Jina containing god's creation that had come to witness the grand scene of the Lord's discourse. The structure including the *Lakṣmīvara-maṇḍapa*, wherein the 12 *koṣṭas* or compartments are located, and the *Gandhakuṭi* with the Lord in it is surrounded by seven *bhūmis* or regions, each region being encircled by a rampart called *vedikā* or *sāla*. Those that are *bhavyas*, i.e., those good people who will have the good fortune to attend the Lord's discourse in the *samavasaraṇa* structure have to pass through these regions before they repair to their respective *koṣṭas* in the *Lakṣmīvara-maṇḍapa*. The second *bhūmi* or region is called the "Khātikā-bhūmi" or the region of the tank. According to the "*Śrīpurāṇa*" (a manuscript in Tamil-Grantha in the Madras Oriental Mss. Library), a work on Dīgambara Jaina iconography, this region is described as a delightful tank with fishes, birds, animals and men frolicking in it or playing in it. The *bhavyas* are said to get down into the tank, wash their feet and please themselves as best as they can. And our painting shows this tank-region with those men pleasing themselves by gathering lotus flowers, while animals such as elephants and bulls and birds and fishes are frolicking about and pleasing themselves too as best as they can.¹

The other paintings in a tolerable state of preservation are two dancing figures on the cubical pillars that catch our eye as we enter the cave. They have been figured by Mehta in his book in plates 3 and 4. The one on the right side is not so well preserved as the one on the left, a sketch of which was published by Dr. Dubreuil in the *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. LII, p. 46. From a sketch of the figure left out by Dr. Dubreuil but figured by Mehta in plate 4 of his book we can see that the left hand of the danseuse is stretched out gracefully in the *daṇḍa-hasta* pose. The left hand of the other figure (figured by Dr. Dubreuil) is thrown in the *gaja-hasta* pose. Both are treated with singular grace, their supple movements being rendered with ease, charm and sureness that could result only from the closest observation and aesthetic insight. Mr. Mehta was so much attracted by these danseuses that he bursts out as follows :—'It was left to the artists of

1. A detailed description of the *samavasaraṇa* which occurs in the Dīgambara Jaina paintings at Tirupparuttikkunram near Kāncīpuram finds a place in my work on "Jaina painting" to be published as a volume of the Madras Museum Bulletin.

Southern India to crystallize into immortal form, the rhythm of dance and the energy of dynamic movement, as seen respectively in the glorious figures of swaying *Apsaras*, "loaded with jewelled ornaments, broad-hipped, narrow-waisted, powerful and graceful as panthers", and in the noble conception of Śiva as Naṭarāja-the Divine Dancer".¹

On the inner side of the right-hand pillar as we face the cave can be seen a beautiful head with traces of a figure in front and of a woman's head behind. It has been figured in plate 1 of Mehta's book. I examined the copy of Mr. Sarma which shows many more details than Mr. Mehta's. It is that of a splendid figure with an ornamental coronet or head-dress and with *patra-kunḍalas* in both the ears. While we agree with Mr. Mehta's description of the figure as "an impressive study . . . showing the strength of delineation and directness of treatment which belonged to the palmy days of Ajanta and Bagh"¹ we are unable to accept his identification of the figure as Ardhanārīśvara or Mahādeva. The figure is surely that of a king accompanied by his wife whom he probably leads into the shrine. Such is the purpose in relegating this painting on the inner side of the pillar as if the persons are heading towards the interior of the shrine. The *patra-kunḍalas* and the ordinary coronet (not *jaṭā-makuṭa* as Mehta describes it to be) show that Śiva was not intended. And Śiva has no place in a Jaina shrine. We are unable to see in the figure any divinity of expression that should go as a monopoly to Śiva alone. Such dignity, if any, can go to the king of the land also, who in this case ought to be the royal artist Mahendravarman I. That the figure behind him is that of his wife and that he is in the act of going with her to the shrine can be easily inferred if we bear in mind that the Varāha cave at Mahābalipuram contains a portrait of Mahendravarman heading towards the shrine, accompanied by two of his queens, the nearer of whom he appears to be leading by her right hand, while his half-raised right hand points towards the shrine.² He was probably similarly engaged here, though only the head of the king remains with the outline of what looks like a feminine face, which we have assumed to be that of his queen.

The discussion over this head takes us to the still more fascinating study of the newly-discovered fresco-paintings in the

1. Mehta, p. 12.

2. Gopalan, *Pallavas of Kāñchī*, p. 88.

Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñcīpuram. The credit of their discovery goes again to Dr. Jouveau Dubreuil who has brought to our notice marvellous Pallava frescoes executed in the same style as those of Śittannavāśal. Mr. Sarma has taken copies of these also, two of which have been photographed and published in the *Triveni*, (Vol. IV, No. 1). Fig. 1 shows the outline of the left side of a man, probably a king, with an expression identical with that of Mahendra at Śittannavāśal. I had been to the Kailāsanātha temple several times and have seen them and three others also exposed by the Professor. The paintings cannot date earlier than 690 A. D., for the temple came into existence only then during the rule of Narasimhavarman II *alias* Rājasimha. The tradition regarding paintings should have descended down to Mahendra's successors who were probably also artists like their illustrious predecessor. What has been exposed consists of 5 heads of which only one is entire. Among the others, one is the right half of a man's *torso*, another shows the fore-arm and three fingers of a hand, a third shows another half-head and a fourth the head of probably a child with a small coronet on head. A panel contains the design of two vases placed alongside. Traces of drapery or figure, rather fragmentary, are made out here and there, also traces of "crude brush lines" which Mr. Sarma thinks to be of far later date.

In the few that are visible, the outlines are clear and sharp and the colouring bright and rich. The lines flow in curves and have been done in a masterly manner so as to look as if they were designed without any effort. The heads so far revealed are those of men, graceful and dignified. The head that Mr. Sarma figures in the *Triveni* as No. 1 (Vol. IV, part I) is easily the best, though half eaten away. The left eye that alone remains "sits charmingly over the left cheek and is full of pathos and feeling revealing a whole world of its own". It is hoped that the coats of white wash that the cells in this temple have had periodically will soon be removed carefully and when these are removed much more of these paintings are likely to be exposed. Even in the Śittannavāśal temple the inner cell shows on the floor a round stone piece inserted in its centre. Does it lead to a cell underneath? And does the cell underneath also treasure paintings, which, if so, must be in a state of excellent preservation? This awaits further investigation.

(b) *Music.*

We saw under Pallāvaram that the king bore the *biruda* "Saṅkīrṇajāti", because he was probably the inventor of a method of keeping musical time (*tāla*) which was called or which he named *Saṅkīrṇajāti*. While examining the Māmaṇḍūr inscription we remarked that the record praised the musical talents of the king also. In line 1 of that record, the term *Gandharva-śāstra* occurs which refers to music in general, *gandharvas* being celebrated for music. Any song beautifully sung goes down as *gandharvagāna* in Indian parlance. In line 9 there is a reference to musical sounds in the pitch (*guru*) expressed in sounds; but it is not clear what this reference meant, whether it meant that that was the system in vogue or was the system sought to be introduced by the king. Lines 12 and 13 contain the expressions already examined which show the king as a Master Musician, and as an inventor of a notation of musical sounds in vocal music. It is said that by his invention he was able to find a place in vocal music for all the intonations of sounds that a *vīṇā* could produce. As luck would have it, the Kuṭumiyāmalai inscription contains this invention of his and immortalises his achievement in this field. It has been very ably edited by Rao Bahadur Bhandarkar in the *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. xii, pp. 226-237.

It is a matter for regret that we have very few works on music. In fact, the only ancient work on the subject known is Bharata's "Nāṭya-śāstra" which defines only the *jātis* or the modes of music and records no system of notation that could enable us to know the nature of music of that period (4th century A.D.). The next work that gives us some information on this subject is *Nārādī-Śikṣā*, the date of which is not known, but which is certainly earlier than the *Saṅgītaratnākara* of Śārṅgadeva (1210-1247 A.D.). The system of notation given in the last work was probably a mixture of an earlier and current notations, the only one available to us of the earliest music for a pretty long time. But it is a pity that Śārṅgadēva cannot be said to be giving us the earliest notation that came down to him in his time, since, to explain away certain discrepancies, he interpreted ancient rules so as to make them agree with the actual practice of the day.

As though foreseeing this dearth in materials concerning ancient music, the Master-Musician, Mahendra, the seer (*ṛṣi*) that

he was, has given us in his characteristic immortal way the notation of music that was either current then or was invented by him. The latter is more probably the case for we have learnt sufficient of the king to know that he was not content with things old, the "*vicitra-citta*" that he was. Mr. Bhandarkar thinks that the notation was intended for the *vīṇā*, but as the *Māmaṇḍūr* record proclaims, which we have stressed already, it was the king's ambition to design a way by which what would appear to any one as possible in stringed instrument was brought within reach of vocal music also.

In the light of this explanation Mr. Bhandarkar's difficulty to give satisfactory explanation of the marks over the letters in the inscription which he calls "vowel endings" is solved. They are just marks by which the needed intonations, known, of course, to the *vīṇā*-players but not to the vocalists—(I mean as marks which they could study or teach their disciples),—had to be expressed, and that satisfactorily, so that even vocalists may easily get habituated to the new course. The point can be easily made clear by giving the instance of the diacritical system. As Sanskrit letters had to be expressed in English, the need for a system of transliteration and diacritical marks had to be introduced which is a nuisance and despair to most Indian writers. Yet another instance is the device adopted for indicating the *udātta* and *anudātta* and *svārīta* sounds (*svaras*).

Another difficulty of Mr. Bhandarkar is how to account for the presence of some dots on the tops of some of the notes. They are probably intended to mark the time of each intonation or to indicate timed vibrations or perhaps the gradations of sound. The analogy of the device that we adopt in expressing *pluta* will explain our point. Just as all these transliteration and diacritical devices had to be manipulated so that one language richer in every respect, had to find the best expression in another language, poorer when compared with the former, so also music and that stringed music, had to be so manipulated that, although it was richer in sounds that could not ordinarily be vocally expressed, it had to go into the smaller compartment of vocal music, without losing anything and none the worse for it. Even the diacritical system is a despair to many Indians. What then have we to say regarding this *Vicitracitta's* mad idea (*matta-ilāsa*) of converting stringed music into vocal music by the in-

roduction of a device, *viz.*, the ushering of an invention in notation. Surely his title "Saṅkīrṇajāti" was bestowed on him more for an invention of his in the realm of modes of music (*jātis*) than for his "mixed-caste" as the late Gopinatha Rao unfortunately observed.

Coming to the inscription itself, it is divided into seven sections corresponding to the seven classical *rāgas*, *viz.*, (1) *Madhyama-grāma*, (2) *Ṣaḍjagrāma*, (3) *Ṣaḍaba (va)*, (4) *Sādhārīta*, (5) *Pañcama*, (6) *Kaiśikamadhyaṃ* and (7) *Kaiśika*. The arrangement of the notes on the stone is described by Mr. Bhandarkar as follows:—"Each section consists of a collection of groups of four notes, arranged in sub-sections of 16, each sub-section taking up one line of the inscription. . . . Each group in a sub-section ends in the same note. The note in which a particular *rāga* must be ended is called the *nyāsa* (final). That sub-section which consists of groups having the *nyāsa* for their ending note, is put the last in a section. The other sub-sections are arranged according to the position of the ending note in the Hindu *gamut* "sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni," a sub-section consisting of groups ending in *sa* preceding one of groups ending in *ri* and so on."¹ The seven *rāgas* mentioned in this inscription are not mentioned in the work of Bharata. The later works such as *Nārādī-śikṣā* and the *Saṅgīta-ratnākara* of Śārṅgadeva have them, though with slight differences.

Thus our inscription is the earliest, permanent record of a wonderful system of notation designed by King Saṅkīrṇajāti, whom we can call unhesitatingly "the father of South Indian Music". On comparing this with the definition of the *rāgas* found in the other two later works, Mr. Bhandarkar has demonstrated that the music of our record agrees more with the *Nārādī-śikṣā* than with the *Saṅgīta-ratnākara*, a point that establishes the indebtedness of the *Nārādī-śikṣā* to our record. This is further corroborated by a South Indian tradition² that the present South Indian Music is based on the teachings of sage Nārada. Nārada is the arch-songster of Hindu mythology. If he is the

1. *E. I.*, Vol. XII, p. 227.

2. Even Chinnaswami Mudaliar records it in his *Oriental Music*.

author of the Śikṣā named after him, is he after all the follower of Mahendra, the Father of South Indian Music? Surely even the superior musical accomplishments of the celebrated sage-musician pale into insignificance before the high musical equipment of a "Mattavilāsa." The peculiarities in the engraving of this record that reflect the rollicking funny temperament of their royal engraver are:—

(1). It begins with "Siddham", a term of auspicious commencement that is most common in Buddhist records such as the Aśokan edicts, the Amarāvati and other Buddhist inscriptions. This is followed by "Namaḥ Śivāya" in which the so-called convert to Śaivism is offering worship to the "Destroyer of the Universe."

(2). Each *rāga* has got its label or heading on the left side in a margin and is placed against the section concerned, mostly at the beginning of each section.

(3). The letters are in an excellent state of preservation and are written exactly in the same way as other inscriptions of Mahendra are at Trichinopoly, Kāñcīpuram and Pallāvaram. Their palaeography easily points to the record being assigned to Mahendravarman.

(4). At the bottom of the record, on the left hand side again, a colophon reading as "Śrī-Rudrācāryaśiṣyeṇa Paramamāheśvareṇa rājñā śiṣya-hitārtham kṛtāḥ svarāgamāḥ" announces the author of this musical treatise, who is a king, the devoted disciple of Rudrācārya. He is said to have made the classification of the *svaras* for the good of the *śiṣyas*. Who are the *śiṣyas*? Surely those vocalists that were required as a result of his invention to learn to produce in vocal music (*kaṇṭhaśruti*)¹ all the *svaras* that a *vīṇā* can easily produce. The term *śiṣyas* would mean all lovers of music or students of music.

The above colophon is followed by four words in Tamil of about the same period which serve the purpose of a correction-slip or general remark on the whole subject. They run as "eṭṭir̥kum ēlir̥kum ivai uriya" and mean "These (*svaras*) are

1. See Māmaṇḍūr inscription.

common to eight and seven." This statement is another stunt probably. Knowing as we do by now Mahendravarman's ways, we are tempted to suspect that Mahendra probably introduced another *rāga* also, thus making the total number of *rāgas* eight. The statement would either mean that all the *svaras* mentioned in all the seven sections would apply to the eighth *rāga* that he had invented or that the *svaras* mentioned in the seventh section under the seventh *rāga* would also apply to the eighth *rāga*.

Who is the Rudrācārya, whose disciple the king is said to be? Dr. Pischel, the learned editor of Rudraṭa's *Śṛṅgāratilaka* speaks of Rudraṭa as the greatest Indian rhetorician who occupies a prominent place both by his age and the value of two of his known works, *Kāvyaśālikā* and *Śṛṅgāratilaka*. From internal evidence in his works we come to know that he was also known as Rudra, Rudrabhaṭṭa, Rudrabhaṭa or Bhaṭṭa Rudra, that he was a Śaiva and that he was an admirer of courtesans. The last mentioned interesting fact about this author gives room for the inference that our Rudrācārya and Rudraṭa are one and the same, for it is too well known that courtesans and society girls were taught music and dance (*abhinaya*) by male music-masters who were called *ācāryas*¹. If he was derided as a lover of courtesans he could not help it, for, as Professor of Music and Dancing at the court of King Mahendravarman he had to like his students in the two faculties. Was not Kālidāsa also reviled as a lover of *ganikās*? Has he gone down in the estimate of the world as a result of his infatuation for *ganikās*? No, not a whit. Let it be so too in the case of our Rudrācārya, the Grand Music-Master of King Mahendravarman!

Bāṇa mentions a Rudra as one of his friends² who is probably identical with our Rudrācārya. Dr. Pischel thinks that the Rudra of Bāṇa is different from Rudraṭa, who was a native of Kashmir. He agrees that Rudraṭa was a pretty old author and that in his works he quotes only Bharata, the author of the "Nāṭyaśāstra", though he is himself quoted by several writers including Daṇḍin. Still he assigns him to the middle of the ninth century

1. Cf. Kālidāsa, *Mālavikāgnimitra*.

2. Peterson, *Kādambarī*, p. 51.

A.D. If he quotes Bharata only, it is because he was an earlier writer and was engaged in the study of rhetoric (*alanikāra*) and music that formed a part of Bharata's work. The only work on music then current was probably that of Bharata, he himself being destined to help Mahendra in the latter's noble task of inventing a notation of music. If Daṇḍin and Bāṇa quote him, it was because he was very popular then. Taking all these data into consideration we can identify Rudraṭa with our Rudrācārya, the contemporary of King Mahendravarman.

Another rock-cut shrine dedicated to Śiva contains a musical composition or notation and is located in a village called Tirumayyam, also in the Pudukottah State, and consequently contiguous to Kuṭumiyāmalai. The late Gopinatha Rao, who discovered it has the following remarks on it:—"The Tirumayyam Cave also contained a musical treatise similar to the Kuṭumiyāmalai inscription. It is engraved on the wall of the shrine to Śiva (rock-cut). A very late Pāṇḍya king has erased a portion of the inscription, stating that it is in an unintelligible script, and has engraved thereon a useless inscription of his own recording perhaps a gift of a few coins. The 'beggar' did not know what serious damage he was doing to an invaluable inscription. The fragments that are available now read here and there:—*Sha (ḍja)*, *Gāndhāram*, *Dhaiva (ta)*,—terms of Indian music, written in the same characters as the Kuṭumiyāmalai inscription"¹. Both the script, and the fact that Mahendravarman was a great music-master, keen on spreading his inventions, will warrant this inscription being assigned to him.

Literature (Poetry, Drama, etc.)

(a) Poetry.

The Māmaṇḍūr inscription gives us also an insight into the poetical talents of this king. He was an admirer of poets like Vālmiki, Bharata and others (*kavis*), and moving as he did in a galaxy of poetical stars, he has given us in his many inscriptions and in the two farces that have luckily been discovered recently his achievements in the field of poetry. Surely he was the *royal poet-laureate* of the day. He gives us also to understand that he was also aware of the *sūtra* form of composition such as we have in the short expressions of the *sūtra* literature, whose main

1. *I. A.*, Vol. LII, p. 47.

feature was brevity¹. The short prose passages and the titles such as we get at Pallāvaram, Kāñcīpuram and Trichinopoly can be explained only in this way. They are pithy and abbreviated expressions of vast ideas which poetry would make a big epic of. Luckily he has not imitated our venerable Pāṇini as otherwise he would have given us *sūtras* like "A A" of the latter, which would have left us only in the dark about his achievements. In the case of Pāṇini he had commentators to explain his ideas expressed in those brief *sūtras*. But not so Mahendra. Probably realising or foreseeing that his *sūtras* will be a despair to posterity and, thanks also to that galaxy of poetical and musical stars which had at its centre the *uḍupati* (moon) Mahendra, he has given us his ideas in excellent poetic compositions, some of which are engraved on rocks, while the majority of them are introduced in the two farces that have come down to us.

The verses that he composed for engraving are excellent pieces in various metres ranging from the common *Anuṣṭubh* to the uncommon *Kokilaka*, with a display of a few varieties of the *Āryā* and the *Vasantatilakā*. The Mahendravarāḍi verse is in the *Kokilaka* metre, each *pāda* occupying a separate line as usual. *Māmaṇḍūr* contains pithy *Anuṣṭubh* verses. *Maṇḍagapaṭṭu* has an excellent piece in the *Gīti*, a variety of *Āryā*. *Dalavānūr* is again in *Anuṣṭubh* with a *prāsa* on the words "narendra" and "śatrumalla". *Sīyamaṅgalam* has an *Āryā* verse. Trichinopoly supplies an excellent leaf from the poetic book of the king. It has verses in *Anuṣṭubh*, *Āryā*, *Vasantatilakā*, *Śārdūlavikrīḍita*, etc., with a fair sprinkling of *prāsa* words. (Such a sprinkling produces a better effect in the minds of *vidagdhas* than a thorough riddling of the verses with *prāsa* words alone). These verses are published in S. I. I. Vol. I, pp. 28-30. The celebrated verse beginning with "Kāverīn-nayanābhirāma—" is in the *Śārdūlavikrīḍita*. Verses 2 and 3 on page 29 are in *Āryā*. Verse 1 on page 30 is in the *Vasantatilakā* with a *prāsa* on "śaila" and "sthānu". Verse 2 on the same page is in *Āryā* and has a *prāsa* on "giri", "giriśa" and "artha". Verse 4 is in the *Vasantatilakā*, with a mild attempt at *prāsa* suggested by the term "kr̥ta" in the last line.

1. It is said of such *sūtra*-composers that cutting down an expression even by a single letter gave them a joy equivalent to that joy that one will have on becoming a father—*akṣara lāghavam putrotsavam manyante*.

If we examine the verses in the farce "*Mattavilāsa*"¹, the authorship of which goes undoubtedly to Mahendravikrama, we find almost all the principal metres are represented. They are for instance, *Śārdūlavikrīḍita* (vv. 1, 3, 6, 17, 20), *Sragdharā* (v. 23), *Anuṣṭubh* (vv. 4, 12, 16, 18, 22), *Upeṇḍravajrā* (vv. 2, 19), *Āryā* (vv. 5, 11, 14), *Vasantatilakā* (vv. 7, 10), *Indravajrā* (v. 8), *Mālinī* (v. 9), *Upajāti* (vv. 13, 15), *Rucirā* or *Mañjubhāṣiṇī* (v. 21). Relying on the evidence of Māmaṇḍūr inscription we have treated "*Bhagavadajjuka*" as another work of Mahendra. While we shall discuss its authorship under "drama", we shall speak here about the poetical talents of the king as revealed from the verses in the work. There are in all 37 verses in almost all the popular metres. The metres that occur are as follows:—*Anuṣṭubh* (vv. 11, 13, 15, 16, 24, 29-34), *Āryā* (vv. 1, 2, 12, 18, 19, 27, 37), *Śārdūlavikrīḍita* (vv. 3, 21), *Upajāti* (vv. 4-7, 14, 17, 22), *Praharṣiṇī* (vv. 8, 10), *Mālinī* (v. 9), *Vasantatilakā* (vv. 20, 23, 28, 35, 36), *Sragdharā* (v. 25), and *Indravajrā* (v. 26).

(b) *Drama*.

Mattavilāsa.

This is a tiny farce, the work of Mahendravikrama of the Pallava family, who is referred to in it as the son of Simhaviṣṇu and the ruler of Kāñcīpuram. It derives its name from one of the titles of the king himself, *Mattavilāsa*, bestowed on him in the manner we have described already. "With a thoroughly Indian play on words, however, the title *Matta-vilāsa* is also applied to the play, inasmuch as it represents the wild pranks of a drunken Śaiva ascetic." The play has been published as No. 55 of the Trivandrum Sanskrit Series, and we owe an excellent translation of it to Dr. L.D. Barnett published by him in the Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, London.² Some of the titles of the king such as *Mattavilāsa*, *Guṇabhara*, *Avanibhājana*, and *Śatrumalla* occur in the prelude and the *Bharata-vākya* or the last verse of the play. The scene of the play is laid in the city of Kāñcīpuram itself, the capital of the Pallavas about this time.

The play is a first-class farce with a plot relating to "the wanderings of a tipsy Kapālin or "Skull-bearer" (a Śaiva ascetic of a very low order who carries for alms-bowl the *kaṭpāla* or half

1. Trivandrum Sanskrit Series, No. 55;—edited by Ganapati Sastri.

2. Vol. V, part IV, pp. 697-717.

of a human skull), with his girl through the streets of Kāñcī, the disappearance of his skull-bowl, his encounter with a Buddhist friar of rather lax virtue named Nāgasena¹, whom the *Kaṭṭalin* accuses of having stolen his bowl, the squabble that thence arises between them, the interposition of a *Pāsupata* (a member of another class of Śaiva votaries) in the dispute, and the appearance on the scene of a wandering lunatic who brings back the missing bowl, which has been carried away by a *pariah* dog and picked up by the lunatic, whereupon all ends happily."

As Dr. Barnett observes, "within this loosely jointed framework there is much rollicking fun of the knock-about kind, with no small measure of wit and humour. The characters are vigorously drawn, especially the tipsy *Kaṭṭalin* with his unfailing flow of logic and theology and the Buddhist monk with his leaning towards wine and beauty and his desire to find scriptural warrant for them, while the damsel's shrewish femininity is cleverly sketched, and the poor lunatic babbles and acts with a consequent inconsequence that reminds the reader of Lewis Carroll. Altogether the little play is a remarkably smart production of the *picaresque genre*, replete with mirth and satire."² The Doctor suspects that there are hidden in the text some topical allusions, which is too true. I am discussing these points in two papers to be published elsewhere, entitled "Bhagavadaj-jukam—and its authorship", and "The Religion of Mahendrarvarman I". I shall, however, give here some of the conclusions that I have arrived at there that have a bearing on the subject on hand.

The style in both the farces is the same, the characters are drawn vigorously and the Buddhist monks are ridiculed for the very comfortable lives they were leading about the time of Mahendrarvarman, thanks to the munificence of *Śreṣṭhis* like Dhanadāsa in the play *Mattavilāsa*. That Kāñcīpuram was almost flooded with the Buddhist priests is evident from what the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsiang says about Kāñcīpuram when he visited that city in about 640 A.D. According to him there were in the

I. Possibly it is more than a coincidence that this is also the name of a celebrated Father of the Buddhist Church, the learned protagonist of the *Milinda-pañha*.

2. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, London, Vol. V, Pt. IV, pp. 698-9.

city some hundreds of *saṅghārāmas* and 10,000 priests, studying the teachings of the *Sthavira* school belonging to the Great Vehicle (*Mahāyāna*). We have it also from him that there were some 80 temples of the *Devas* (probably Hindu) and that there were many heretics called *Nirgranthas* (i.e., Jains). Thus, we learn that in the earlier half of the seventh century, the Pallava country, and especially Kāñcīpuram, the Pallava capital, was the abode of quite a number of Buddhists and Jains, not to speak of Hindus and that there were also in the city some 80 *Deva* temples. These *Deva* temples were probably erected by Śaivas, Vaiṣṇavas, and other subjects of these. So many structures of diverse faiths could not have come into existence in the Pallava country if the Pallavas were not tolerant to all. Whatever may be said of the faiths of these Pallava monarchs, I can never subscribe myself to the belief propagated by the late Rai Bahadur Venkayya, who, of course, relies on Periyapurāṇam and the Trichinopoly inscription, that Mahendravarman I was a Jaina to start with, that he prosecuted Appar first and then became converted by that saint to Śaivism.¹ This point will be discussed at the end of this paper.

The introduction of the *Kāpālīka* and the *Pāśuṣṭa* in the play shows that they too found a place in Kāñcīpuram, that their stay there was suffered by the king who was no believer in persecution of any faith that did not appeal to him. Of course he jokes at them, the artist that he was, and ridicules them to his heart's content. Thereby he enjoys the hilarious fun that a philosopher and poet would enjoy, a fun that he has luckily imparted to us in his immortal farces. In his criticism he spares none. The *Kāpālīkas* come first and they find no favour in his eyes for their filthy habits, addiction to drink and women, hypocritical devotion to Śiva in their own ways, which in their opinion were the only ways, all others being false or misleading, and for their ready running to the *śrutis* and the *smṛitis* for finding sanction to their filthy habits and ideas. In short these *Kāpālīkas* appear to have led a licentious and debaucherous life, in the company of lasses, frequenting taverns and drinking intoxicants in season and out of season as if it was their *dharma* to do so, comparing their drunken revelries to the activities of those sincere ritualists, the believers of the Vedas engaged in performing

1. *E. I.*, Vol. III, p. 278.

sacrifices (*yajñas*), and yet calling themselves devotees of Śiva who would give them untold pleasure and vouchsafe a paradise for them if only they pursued such a life.

Next come the Buddhists of the place, who, in the name of the Lord *Tathāgata*, his noble preachings (*dharma*) and the nobler *saṅgha* that he had established for propagating his teachings, made themselves as comfortable as possible and led an indolent and licentious life almost like that of the *Kāpālīka*, though perhaps not so filthy as the latter. Surely, such indolent, easy-going priests, that had forgotten their Lord's teachings but saw only in his noble creation of the *saṅgha* an opportunity to lead comfortable lives can find no favour in the eyes of any king of a serious bent of mind, not to speak of the *Citrakārapuli* to whom art was long and time was fleeting. These Buddhist *bhikṣus*, as Mahendra represents them to be (in both the farces), appear to be just gluttons, provided with palatial residences in the name of *vihāras*, excellent food including fish and mutton in the forenoon, sweet drinks in the afternoon, *pansuṣari* and nice and elegant clothing, thanks to the munificence of some innocent *upāsakas* like the merchant Dhanadāsa in the present case. Mahendra felt that such comfort would lead even the most active into lethargy and indolence so that they can never be fit to discharge the noble functions that Lord Buddha expected of them when he established the *Bhikṣu-saṅgha*. He is afraid that such comfort as they were placed in would make them yearn for women and liquor. Probably he is recording actual cases of abuses in the Buddhist *Bhikṣu-saṅgha* at Kāñcīpuram. In his own characteristic jolly manner he depicts the above fear of his by making the *bhikṣu* in the play speak out his mind.

The *bhikṣu* demands women and drink and is wild with the *Sthaviras* of the *Saṅgha*, whom he considers as unworthy disciples of the *Tathāgata*. He argues that if the Lord *Tathāgata*, the embodiment of kindness that he was, could procure for them so much comfort as they could actually command, how then could he not foresee their wants in the direction of women and drink? Surely the All-knower (*Sarvajña*) that he was, he did foresee and included them too in his sayings which were recorded in the scriptures. But the old members of the *Saṅgha*, the *Sthaviras*, who could neither enjoy women nor drink on account of age, but, however, jealous of the youngsters in the *Saṅgha*, not only acted as the

dogs-in-the-manger but also did them a positive injustice by erasing from the old scriptures (*i.e.* from the copies available at the *Sanḅha's* head-quarters) the actual lines containing the Lord's injunctions prescribing to the *bhikṣus* women and liquor. So arguing the *bhikṣu* of the play resolves to find out the originals containing the Lord's sayings admitting women and liquor and hopes to receive the sincere thanks of the whole *Sanḅha* if he should succeed in discovering such texts. Later on the same *bhikṣu* licks his lips when the *Kāpālika* and his woman drink and the former offers him to partake of it, and reveals to them by his greedy looks his readiness to do so, the only bar being that people may see (*mahājano draṅsyati*). The drink that the *Kāpālika* offers him attracts him on one hand and the charming lass by his side, the *Kāpālikā*, on the other. He cannot help murmuring repeatedly that the lass by the side of the *Kapālin* was charming (*aho lalitarūpā upāsikā*—, p. 14). Oh! how he wished to possess her. He demonstrated his eagerness to have her later on by rushing to her side and helping her to get up when she had fallen down while attempting to snatch the *bhikṣu's* almsbowl from him. Probably the way in which he lifted her up should have alarmed the *Kapālin* who bursts out as "*paśyantū... māheśvarāḥ anena duṣṭa-bhikṣunāmadhārakeṇa Nāgasenena mama priyatamā.....pāṇigrahaṇam kriyamāṇām*" (p. 18).

An interesting point to be noted is that the *bhikṣu*, while sighting the *Kapālin*, wants to avoid him remarking "*ayam Ekāmrvāsī duṣṭakāpālikaḥ*" (p. 13), *i. e.*, "it is that rascal of a *Kapālin* who lives in *Ekāmra*". This gives room for the conjecture that the *Kapālin* (he had no fixed abode) was living in the precincts of the *Ekāmra* temple which is probably the present *Ekāmbaranātha* temple or more probably the earlier shrine around which the present temple grew.

The King does not spare the Jainas also. He does not approve of Jaina philosophy contained in the expression "*duḥkhasya kāryam sukham*" which lays down that souls must be freed from the influences of matter by means of mortifications such as celibacy, plucking out hair in a most torturing manner called "*loch*", keeping the body filthy, fixing time for food (this refers to the periodical *pāraṇās* after a period of fasting peculiar to Jaina ascetics), being scantily dressed (or almost sans-clothing)

etc. He remarks that these mortifications only tend to torture living beings (p. 7).

The King has also a hit at the *Pāśupata*, whom he depicts as also dissipated, running after women. In fact, the *Pāśupata* is smitten with love for the same woman that follows the *Kapālin* and wants to win her. He comes on the scene when the *Kapālin* cries out for help just when the *bhikṣu* had helped the woman to get up, and not comprehending the scene well, he comes to the conclusion that the lady is "at her old games" and that after "various affairs of the heart she is now flirting with the Buddhist friar." The woman attracted him so much that he resolves a scheme to win her. He would feign to support the *bhikṣu* first against the *Kapālin* and when the latter is discomfited he would no doubt cut out the *bhikṣu* and come out such a victor that the lady must needs be attracted to. Victory over the *pratihastin* (the *bhikṣu*) should mean that, if it would mean anything at all. In verse 14, he describes the lady as his (*dayilā*) who was lured by the Buddhist friar "with a farthing (*kākaṇī*) that he shows her in the pocket of his robe" just as a cow is drawn along with a handful of fodder held before it (p. 19).

In short, all these so-called religionists, whether Buddhist, *Kāpālika* or *Pāśupata*, are so corrupt that they are depicted here as doing just the things prohibited, prohibited not only by their own respective scriptures but also by the ordinary moral codes relating to behaviour etc., without feeling any compunction for what they were doing.

The *Pāśupata* leaves the scene at the end after blessing the reconciled parties thus :—"May this feud which kept you asunder till you became reconciled become eternal source of mutual goodwill and love, like the *Kirāta's feud with Arjuna*." This allusion to the strife between *Arjuna* and the *Kirāta*, i.e., Śiva, is more than a mere allusion. It reveals the personality of the famous poet Bhāravi behind the composition of the *Mattavilāsa* or for the matter of that any composition of King Mahendra in literature. It perhaps proves the existence of Bhāravi at the court of King Mahendra, as we shall see.

The date of Bhāravi, the author of the immortal *Kirātārjunīya*, was hitherto known from an inscription¹ dated Śaka 556

1. Aihole inscription of Pulakeśin II,—*E. I.*, Vol. VI, pp. 3 and 7.

(634 A. D.) in which he and Kālidāsa are spoken of as great poets.¹ Daṇḍin, author of *Daśakumāracarita* and *Kāvyaadarśa*, was, according to Mādhavācārya, an younger contemporary of Bāṇa, who flourished in the court of Harshavardhana of Kānyakubja. It appears that Bāṇa was a younger contemporary of Bhāravi, and Daṇḍin was perhaps a younger contemporary of Bāṇa himself.

Luckily two works in Sanskrit, entitled *Avantisundarī-kathā*, and *Avantisundarī-kathāsāra* throwing light on Pallava history were discovered some time back and published in 1924 by Messrs. Ramakrishna Kavī and Pandit Ramanatha Sastri, as No. 3 of the *Dakṣiṇabhārati* Series. The former is in prose with a poetic introduction and the latter is a summary in verse of the former. The prose work was done by Daṇḍin, who gives his own ancestry in which luckily Bhāravi finds a place according to the above edition. According to the *Avantisundarī-kathāsāra* (pp. 2-4) in this edition, we get the following account of the family to which Bhāravi and Daṇḍin belonged:—A brahmin-family of the *Kauśika-gotra* had removed from Gujarat to Acalapura (Ellichpur in Central India) where Bhāravi or Dāmodara² as he was also called was born to a Nārāyaṇasvāmi. Viṣṇuvardhana was then the *yuvarāja* and Bhāravi had become a bosom-friend of his. The crown-prince, being a lover of literature, Bhāravi's poetical talents endeared the latter to him so much that Bhāravi had to accompany the crown-prince even in the latter's hunts, in one of which he was forced to eat flesh for want of any other food, for

1. "...sa vijayatām Ravikīrtiḥ, kavitaśrita-Kālidāsa-Bhāravikīrtiḥ||" (*Ibid*, p. 7.)

2. Cf. Harihara Sastri, *Bhāravi and Daṇḍin* (4th Oriental Conference Proceedings, 1927, pp. 44-46). The summary of this article of his and the details that come out clearly from a Ms. copy of the Prose work *Avantisundarikathā* as preserved in the Trivandrum MSS Library have been given by Dr. S. K. Iyengar as follows: "This work traces the descent of Daṇḍin in its introductory chapter. In doing so it brings his great grand-father Gopāla as a fellow-pupil of Bhāravi whom it brings into contact with three kings of South India, viz., Viṣṇuvardhana..., Durvīṇita, among the Gāṅgas who was his own pupil and commented upon the 15th sarga of the *Kirātārjunīya* and wrote a Sanskrit version of the *Bṛhatkathā* and *Simhaviṣṇu* of Kāñcī". See Dr. S. K. Iyengar's note 1 in Gopālan's *Pallavas of Kāñcī*, p. 229.

which sin he was so ashamed that he went out on a self-inflicted exile. While in exile, another prince, this time Durvinīta, a Western Gāṅga *yuvārāja*, who was exiled by his father, became his friend and spent his period of exile basking in the sun of Bhāravi's poetry. It was probably in this exile that the latter composed his *Kirātārjunīya*, probably inspired by the forest scenes, and the Gāṅga prince wrote a commentary on his friend's work (upon the 15th *sarga*) as revealed by some Gāṅga inscriptions.

The fame of Bhāravi reaching the ears of Śimhaviṣṇu, the father of Mahendravarman, he invited him to his court at Kāñcīpuram, gave him all comforts and treated him like his son.¹ Bhāravi was 20 years of age² when he came to Śimhaviṣṇu and was by then the author of his *Kirātārjunīya*, a marvellous achievement for one of the teens. His commentator Durvinīta was also young. Bhāravi was blessed not only in his patrons but also in his friends, for whom should he have as his friend now but the *yuvārāja* Mahendravarman! Śimhaviṣṇu appears to have died soon after and it was given to Mahendravarman to enjoy fully the company of the poet, as a result of which of course we get the "royal poet and artist." The narrative goes on saying that the poet had a son,³ called Manoratha, whose fourth son was one Vīradatta, to whom the *Kavi* Daṇḍin was born. Daṇḍin we have seen was a younger contemporary of Bāṇa, the court-poet of Harṣavardhana.

On the invitation of a great architect, Lalitālaya, Daṇḍin went to *Mahāmallaṭṭapura* (Mahābalipuram) and witnessed the skill of the architect who had joined the broken hand of the image *Anantaśayana* (Viṣṇu on the serpent) without there being any trace of the joint. This image is described to be near the sea. Surely, there is a reference in this to the shore pagoda at Mahābalipuram. And the place Mahāmallaṭṭapura and the image of *Anantaśayana* (*Mukunda*) are referred to in the work as of common knowledge. The fact that Daṇḍin is invited to witness the skill of the sculptor is significant in this way. As Daṇḍin was the Court-poet at the Pallava court and as he had the legacy of his great-grandfather Bhāravi⁴ who was

1. *Avantisundarikathā*, p. 7, l. 5—*putrikaranena*.

2. *Ibid*, p. 7, l. 2.—*viṃśatideśa-varṣa-deśīyaḥ*.

3. Cf. Dr. S. K. Iyengar's note in Gopālan's *Pallavas of Kāñcī*, p. 229.

4. We rely on Rāmakriṣṇa Kavi's edition.

probably associated in some form or other with the erection of either temples or the carving of sculptures at Mahāmallapuram, Daṇḍin as a representative of the family to which belonged Bhāravi had probably to supply the architects and the sculptors themes from ancient lore or mythology which they could translate into stone. Bhāravi was probably similarly engaged by Mahendrarvarman, a noble and pleasing task indeed for that young poet. Should it surprise us therefore if we say that the first theme that suggested to Bhāravi or to the king himself was the glorious theme of the poet's *Kirātārjunīya*, which was a classic then, spoken of by every one and so very popular that it was commented upon by Durvinīta! The theme of the *Kirāta* and *Arjuna* would suggest itself to any one, especially if it is borne in mind that the *Kirātārjunīya* of Bhāravi won for him the unique honour of being ranked with Kālidāsa himself as revealed from the Aihole inscription dated Śaka 556 (".....kavitāśrita-Kālidāsa-Bhāravi-Kīrtiḥ"). Such an honour undoubtedly indicates that Bhāravi was indeed the poet of the day, beloved by Viṣṇuvardhana who was ruling probably at Ellichpur, admired by the western Gāṅga Durvinīta who drank the nectar of the poet's immortal classic *Kirātārjunīya* as manifested by his commentary on the poet's work and treasured by King Mahendra of an equally poetic bent of mind. It should not surprise us therefore to find the king devising means by which he could perpetuate the glorious theme of his friend's immortal prize-classic. To the "Vicitra-citta" nothing else but rock would suggest itself as we have had occasions to see in the earlier pages of this paper. He drags the poet to Mahāmallapuram,¹ and gives the poet the deserved honour of carving in his presence the theme of *Kirātārjunīya* so that the glory that was Bhāravi's could go from transitory mouth to permanent stone. Such then is indeed the explanation of the carving at Mahāmallapuram which Dr. S. Krishnaswami Iyengar has so ably identified as "Arjuna's penance." The authorship of this can certainly go to Mahendra rather than to his son, in the

1. Probably the Pallava port from where later on in the time of his son Narasimhavarman I a fleet was fitted out to sail for Ceylon to help Mānavamma against the usurper Hattha-Datta II. Dr. Dubreuil has proved in his *Pallavas*, (p. 41) that this place was the naval station for the Pallava fleet. The place serves as a landmark for ships even now like Negapatam further south.

absence of evidence pointing towards the latter, and then in the light of our interpretation.

This receives confirmation from the presence of caves in the place such as the Varāha cave which contains portraits of Śiṃhaviṣṇu and Mahendravarman and were probably carved by Mahendra himself. That Mahendra had no religious fanaticisms nor did he share the persecuting zeal of a religious fanatic is borne testimony to in the first place by Hiuen Tsiang's account of Kāñcīpuram, secondly by the nature of the cave-temples built by him, such as Śittanāvāśal dedicated to the Jaina gods, Mahendravāḍi dedicated to Viṣṇu, Maṇḍagapaṭṭu dedicated to the *Trimūrti* and several others dedicated to Śiva, and thirdly by his presence with family in the cave temple here dedicated to the Varāha *avatār* of Viṣṇu, and by his declaration in the Māmaṇḍūr inscription that he was carrying out "the mandate of God Narasiṃha (Viṣṇu), as dark as thousands of clouds, with head bent low with devotion to the god." Indeed Śiṃha or Narasiṃha appears to have appealed to him so much that he named his son Narasiṃha after that god. The other crude carving at Mahāmallaṭṭapuram, which appears to be a copy of the one under discussion, can be explained as a rough trial plan designed by Mahendravarman earlier than the latter but dropped either because of technical flaw or lack of fidelity to the original or as a later copy of that well-executed one relegated to less-skilled hands, betraying a decadence of Pallava art that could not have set in either in the time of Mahendra or of his nobler son Narasiṃha even. It could have come in at a later period in Pallava history, probably about 700 A. D.

Mr. Ramakrishna Kāvi attributes a work called *Gandhamādana* mentioned in the *Avantisundarī-kathā* to Mahendra on the ground that the *Śrīvara* who is cited in the work as its author (p. 7, ll. 9-10) was probably a *biruda* of the title-monger Mahendra¹. It is a pity we have no data to verify this interesting piece of information which awaits further investigation. But we cannot help thinking that the author who is cited as a king, bearing the titles "Sāhasāṅka" and "Śrīvara" was probably our Mahendra. This, if admitted, would add to the already long list of the king's *birudas* two more which rhyme well with the

1. "....Sāhasāṅkaḥ sa bhūpatiḥ (I) Sevyam sakala-lokasya vidadhe Gandhamādanam (II)"—Introduction, p. 3.

others known. The statement "sevyam sakalalokasya vidadhe," i.e., "he made it within reach of the whole world" reveals the too well-known temperament of Mahendra, which we had seen under Kuṇḍumiyāmalai (*śiṣyahitārtham*), to dedicate his works for the world, surely the dictates of an artistic instinct. In short he perpetuated everything of beauty that he did preferably in stones and secondarily in books, of which only a few have come down to us.

Bhagavadajjukam.

This is a tiny farce like the *Mattavilāsa*, the authorship of which, though unknown, is assigned to Bodhāyana by its commentator, who too strangely enough does not give out his own name. Later writers such as Sukumāra speak of a Bodhāyana as a poet. My friend, Mr. V. Prabhakara Sastri of the Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, who has edited this farce excellently in Telugu and Sanskrit has discussed the question of its authorship in his introduction to his Sanskrit edition¹ and has come to the conclusion that the author must have lived prior to the seventh century and that there is a likelihood of Mahendra being its author, though it is equally possible to assign its authorship to Bodhāyana, relying on the anonymous commentator of the work, whose date is unknown.² As against the latter possibility it may be pointed out that the commentator's time is not known, nor his name. By the time of the commentator the real author's name might have got dimmed and somehow the name of Bodhāyana, the *sūtrakāra*, came to be associated with the work. As the author has not mentioned his name in the *prastāvanā*, sufficient room is given for wild conjectures. In all probability this farce should have been more popular in the time of Bodhāyana, probably because of the ridicule that it contains regarding the then Buddhists, that Bodhāyana taught it to his *śiṣyas* and thus made it popular. To our mind it appears therefore that Bodhāyana was so much attracted by this farce that he almost made it his own and popularised it. Probably even in his time its author was unknown; consequently his disciples and later commentators took Bodhāyana to be its author though he was only author to its popularity. If the *prastāvanā* did contain the name of the *Kavi*

1. Published by Messrs. Vavilla Ramaswami Sastrulu & Sons, 1925.

2. The authorship of *Bhagavadajjukam* forms the subject of a separate paper of mine to be published shortly.

as does the other farce, the *Mattavilāsa*, much speculation regarding its authorship could be avoided.

The verse in the 6th line of the Māmaṇḍūr inscription is so constructed as to give room for the supposition that the "hāsyam" called "Bhagavadajjukam" was probably a work of Mahendra in the same way as "*Mattavilāsa*" was. Internal evidences from both *Mattavilāsa* and *Bhagavadajjuka* would point towards a single author for both. In the first place, both are farces with much rollicking fun of the knock-about kind that appealed to the satirical artist Mahendra. In the second place, the style of the composition is the same in both, the style lucid and the verse simple, yet charming. In the selection of the metres of the verses there is a distinct and remarkable preference in both to the *āryā*, *anuṣṭubh*, *indravajrā*, *vasantatilākā*, *mālinī*, *uṣajāti*, *śārdūlavikrīḍita* and *sragdharā*. Of these again, *āryā*, *anuṣṭubh*, *vasantatilākā* and *śārdūlavikrīḍita* find a place in the king's rock-inscriptions.

But the most telling evidence is, however, the theme in both—ridicule. In both, the Buddhists are ridiculed to the king's heart's content. We saw how they were ridiculed in the *Mattavilāsa*. We shall see how they are similarly treated in this work. On page 4, the *śiṣya*, a brahmin by birth, confesses how he became a Buddhist *bhikṣu* because he had nothing to eat in his house, and how when he thus changed his faith he was provided by the *Bhikṣu-saṅgha* with a robe, an alms-bowl and an umbrella and how later on he had to renounce that too, because the Buddhists had meal only once in the day. What they had for the rest of the day is supplemented by the *Mattavilāsa* (p. 12), viz., drinks, *paṇsupāri*, etc. But to a glutton of the type of the *śiṣya* in the *Bhagavadajjukam* even such comforts as the Buddhists had were not sufficient. So he discards the robe and the alms-bowl (probably because he can get them anywhere) but treasures the umbrella alone, for in no other faith are mendicants supplied with umbrella (p. 4) and becomes the attendant of the ascetic (*parivrājaka*).

The umbrella is also significant in another way. It shows that the seat of the play was a hot place, nearer the equator; hence the particular care of the *śiṣya* to retain it. Again on page 13 the *śiṣya* finds in the shavenness of the ascetic's head only a bread-winning device, a conclusion

which he arrives at with a preliminary remark that so far as he was concerned, what was nearer his heart was the heap of choice food (of various kinds) that was stored in the Buddhist *saṅgha* for the "Śākya-Śramaṇakas" (p. 13—*mama abhipretam śākya-śramaṇakānām kīraṇāt (su)sādhitāni saṅghappravṛttāni bhojanāni aśitum*). On page 14 the *śiṣya* offers his thanks to the Buddha, for he was wise enough to lay it down as one of the rules that no Buddhist should fail to partake of food and that in time (*āhārapramādaḥ sarvapramādaḥ iti mantrayamāṇāya namo Bhagavate Buddhāya*). Asked by the ascetic to explain what he meant the *śiṣya* tells the ascetic again that he had joined the Buddhist *Saṅgha* first because of love of food and comfort (*prātaraśanalobhena śākyaśramaṇakam pravrajito'smi*), and had learnt in the Buddhist camp much of their huge nonsense. When the ascetic expresses willingness to listen to him he comes out with *Sāṃkhya* first and when corrected repeats the Buddhist five kinds of *śikṣāpadas* winding up with the usual "Buddham, dharmam, saṅgham śaraṇam gacchāmi" even as the *Śākya-bhikṣu* does in the *Mattavilāsa* (p. 19). While narrating the *śikṣāpadas* he lays emphasis on that rule which relates to food (*akālabhojanād-viramaṇam śikṣāpadam*, p. 15).

The author gives to the *śiṣya* the character of a misguided youth, attracted to Buddhism by the comfort that the Buddhist *Saṅgha* could warrant him, and impressed not a whit by the teachings of the Lord even as were perhaps most of the *bhikṣus* in the *saṅgha* of his day. He understands Buddhist philosophy as speaking of only *pratyakṣa* things and that consequently he should not believe in the existence of *apratyakṣa* things nor recognise *śabda* as a separate *pramāṇa*. The Buddha's precept with regard to pity and kindness to beings (*karuṇā*) is taken not on its spirit but on its letter with the result that we find the *śiṣya* becoming a prey to an exaggerated over-dose of pity (*anukrośa*) as revealed by his attempts to lament the death of the courtesan. He catches hold of her feet, feels her dead body and so on and raises a huge cry of lamentation (though she was a stranger to him), and when his *guru* chides him for doing so, especially when the woman was dead, he scolds him downright as "heartless" (*nisneha*, pp. 22, 24-25). If one should read this farce fully or see it staged, what would easily suggest itself to one would be satire on Buddhism and the Buddhist *Saṅgha*. As we

had pointed out elsewhere¹, the Buddhist order had probably degraded to such an extent that the king of the land himself, Mahendra, takes the axe of reform, the axe that he took being mild satire, surely the prompting of an artist.

Other evidences in the play showing Mahendra as its probable author are as follows :—*Mattavilāsa* is so called because of the activities of a mad man who is introduced in the play at the final stage. Similarly, the name *Bhagavadajjuka* is suggested to the play at its end by the *śiṣya* who, on seeing the ascetic in the *gaṇikā*, and the *gaṇikā* in the ascetic, remarks that the whole scene is highly funny and should be called “the episode of ascetic-courtesan”. There is a similar suggestion in the other farce, *Mattavilāsa*, to the naming of that work, it being a record of the sports of *mattas* (a really mad fellow, a mad (i.e., tipsy) *Kāṇḍika* with his girl also drunk, a fanatically mad *Pāśupata* and a mad, i.e., indolent *bhikṣu*).

The opening verse in both is dedicated to Śiva, in the *Mattavilāsa* to the *Kaṣṭhī*, and in the *Bhagavadajjuka* to Rudra. In the *prastāvanā* of both, the *hāsyā-rasa* is said to appeal most to people. Probably it appealed so to the king. The words “matto yo balarūpayauvanaguṇaiḥ” in verse 3 of *Bhagavadajjuka* would recall a similar expression in the *Mattavilāsa* “yauvanaguṇabhara-mattavilāsa” (p. 1).

The *śiṣya*, it was remarked, took the umbrella alone from the *Saṅgha* probably because the place was hot. The heat of South India is well known, and in it that of Guntur and the Ceded Districts is too well known. Can we look for the seat of the play in this part of the country?

The place is said to be just a “nagara” which is interpreted to mean “Pāṭaliputra” by the anonymous commentator, because there is a tradition that “nagara” usually meant *Pāṭaliputra*. This appears to receive some support from the statement of the *Yama-puruṣa*, who after taking the life of the harlot crosses the Ganges, then the *Vindhya*s and so on (verse 25). But this verse containing the statement of the *Yama-puruṣa* need not be taken to mean that an attempt is made here to describe in order the things that the *Yama-puruṣa* saw on his way to *Laṅkā*. It may probably only be a casual statement enumerating the geography

1. “Buddhist sculptures from a *stūpa* near Goli village, Guntur Dt.” pp. 42-44.

of India, and naturally river *Gaṅgā*, the pre-eminent river finds her place of honour in the list. But there is something else in the self same verse that would probably indicate the seat of the play or perhaps the seat of the author (more probably the latter). Mention is made of *Gaṅgā*, the *Vindhyas*, *Narmadā*, *Sahya* mountains, *Goleyī* (i. e. *Godāvarī*), *Kṛṣṇaveṇṇā* (R. *Kṛṣṇā*), *Paśupatihavana*, i. e. *Śrīśailam*), R. *Suprayogā*, *Kāñcī*, R. *Kāverī*, R. *Tāmbraparnī*, *Malaya* hill, the ocean, and *Laṅkā*. While it is conceded that only the geographical features of India are mentioned here, we cannot help noting the author's partiality to a particular region in South India. While it is a hop from the Ganges to the *Vindhyas*, to the *Narmadā*, to the *Sahya* and to the *Goleyī* (*Godāvarī*), it is not so for the next three items. They are the river *Kṛṣṇā*, *Paśupatihavanam* (*Śrīśailam*) and the river *Suprayogā*. Such a treatment is significant as we shall see later on. From the river *Suprayogā* it is a hop to *Kāñcī*, the Pallava capital, and from the latter it is a similar hop to *Kāverī* and so on.

The region in which the river *Kṛṣṇā*, *Śrīśailam* and the river *Suprayogā* are situate is most important for our study. We know that the river *Kṛṣṇā* passes through the Guntur and Krishna districts. *Śrīśailam* is in the Kurnool District, one of the Ceded Districts. The river *Suprayogā* is not so easy to be located. Luckily the river is mentioned in the Uruvapalli plates of the Pallava *Yuvarāja* Viṣṇugopavarman¹ as forming one of the boundaries of the village of Uruvapalli situate in the district of *Muṇḍarāṣṭra*. *Keṇḍakūra* or *Kaṇḍukūra*, another boundary of Uruvapalli, mentioned in the same plate, is, according to the late Rai Bahadur V. Venkayya, identical with the modern *Kandukūru*, the headquarters of the Kandukur Taluk of the modern Nellore District. The river occurs also in the *Mālepāḍu* plates of the Telugu-Cola, *Puṇyakumāra*², who appears to have held sway in the Nellore and Ceded Districts and who took a fancy in imitating Mahendravarman in assuming titles such as "mārdava-citta" and "madana-vilāsa". This *Puṇyakumāra* is said in these plates to have granted 50 *nivartanas* of land in the south-east corner or quarter of *Birapāru*, situated in *Hiraṇya-rāṣṭra*, on the southern bank of the river *Suprayogā*. Both Venkayya³ and

1. *I. A.*, Vol. V, p. 53.

2. *E. I.*, Vol. XI, pp. 337-345.

3. *I. A.*, Vol. V, p. 53.

Hultzsch¹ are of opinion that the river *Suprayogā* is a small river to be looked for in the Nellore district probably in the vicinity of modern Kandukūr. Dr. N. Venkataramanayya, himself a native of Nellore, tells me that the river *Mutteru*, a tributary of *Munneru* flows very near *Kandukūru* and that consequently it may be identified with our *Suprayogā*.²

The mention of this otherwise insignificant river in such early Pallava records as that of *Yuvarāja Viṣṇugopavarman* and in the Telugu Cola *Puṇyakumāra's* plates and its mention in *Bhagavadajjukam* in contrast to other important rivers like the well-known *Pinākinī* which are strangely omitted may be accounted for as indicating the author's special attraction to that river. In this case, the author was probably a native of the territory watered by this river. Its mention in the Uruvapalli plates and the hop that the *Yama-puruṣa* makes from the *Suprayogā* to *Kāñcī*, the Pallava capital, show that the *Suprayogā* stood as a land-mark. Shall we put it down then as the boundary of the Pallava territories in the north over which Mahendra, as the *yuvarāja* of his father who was evidently ruling the whole land from *Kāñcīpuram*, was ruling? He should have been ruling from some place in the vicinity of the river *Suprayogā*. And in all probability he composed this farce here, in this Telugu country. Thus the zeal of the *śiṣya* in the play to possess the umbrella is also significant inasmuch as Nellore and Guntur Districts are noted for their extreme heat. According to Dr. Jouveau Dubreuil, Nellore served as the boundary line of the Pallava territory later on in the time of Narasimhavarman; and in all probability this river marked this boundary.

The ridicule to which the Buddhists are subjected to in the farce is due to the fact that Mahendra did come across these Buddhists in the northern Pallava territories, whose existence here is attested to by the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsiang³. The Buddhists were swarming the land, with their head-quarters at *Amarāvati*, *Nāgārjunakoṇḍa*, *Ghaṇṭaśālā*, *Bhaṭṭiprolu*, *Bezwada* etc. The *Saṅghas* were surely there along with the corruption that had set in. And our royal artist imbibed a satirical attitude towards the Buddhists here which he recorded in the *Bhagavadajjukam*.

1. *E. I.*, Vol. XI, p. 342.

2. I am indebted to the learned Doctor for this suggestion.

3. *Beal*, Vol. II, p. 97.

Thus we find only the Buddhists reviled. But when he goes down to Kāñcīpuram to take charge of the whole Pallava domain he finds a new experience at Kāñcīpuram. Not only the Buddhists there but also several others such as the *Kāpālikas*, *Pāṣupatas* etc., have to be similarly treated. The result is the "Mattavilāsa", which is therefore *Bhagavadajjukam* plus something more (of satire). The mention of Śrīśailam in *Bhagavadajjukam* as "Paśupatibhavanam", i.e., the abode of Śiva, shows that Śrīśailam, which was for a long time a Buddhist centre¹ known as *Śrīparvata*, had changed hands and had become a centre of Brahmanism about or prior to the time of Mahendra.

The sway and probably stay of Mahendra in the Telugu country is borne testimony to by the find of an inscription of his in the Kapoteśvara temple at Chezerla in the Guntur District². The temple itself is of peculiar shape and is modelled on the Buddhist *cailya*. The inscription, though fragmentary, contains sufficient to indicate that the Pallava king of the *Bhāradvāja-gotra*, Mahendravikrama Mahārāja, who bore the birudas "Avanibhājana" and "Guṇabhara" and who was the ruler of Kāñcī situate on the banks of the river *Vegavatī* made certain grants or gifts to the 12 temple-architects (*devakarmīns*-line 38), under whose care the temple of Kapoteśvara was entrusted probably for their services in doing repairs or perhaps for their renewing the temple itself that had fallen or disappeared (*kāraṇāntaraṇi astamita*-line 15).

The faith of Mahendravarman.

Relying on some of the verses in the *Periyapurāṇam*³ the late Mr. Venkayya started saying that the Tamil saint Appar was "first persecuted and subsequently patronised by a Pallava King, who is said to have demolished the Jaina monastery at Pāṭaliputtiram and built a temple of Śiva called Guṇadaravīccaram".⁴ Since the term *Guṇadaravīccaram* reminds one of the title of Mahendravarman, viz., *Guṇabhara* and as the Trichinopoly inscription contains in one of the verses an allusion to the king called *Guṇabhara* turning back from hostile conduct⁵ his theory receives strength

1. See Nāgārjunakoṇḍa inscriptions.

2. *S. I. I.*, Vol. VI., no. 595.

3. Śēkkiḷār, *Periyapurāṇam*, part I, 1893, VV. 84, 88, 145 and 146.

4. *A. S. I.*, annual report, 1906-07, p. 235.

5. *S. I. I.*, Vol. I, p. 29, V. 2.

that it was Mahendravarman I that came under the influence of Appar. While it is possible to agree with him when he says that "Mahendravarman I must have excavated a number of rock-cut caves and dedicated most of them to the god Śiva", we are unable to agree with him when he says that the king dedicated the temples to Śiva alone "with the proverbial zeal of the new convert."¹ We have learnt sufficient of the king to feel that the king's zeal was that of an artist, not that of a fanatic. The Trichinopoly verse may be interpreted as just indicating that the king had a regard almost amounting to veneration for the saint Appar, whose selfless life and poetic talents must have appealed to him more than even his religious preachings, for we know that the religion of the king was *art* and *poetry*.

If we are to believe the statement in the *Periya-purāṇam* which says that the *Kāḍava* (a synonym for *Pallava*) erased all the Jaina temples and monasteries of the Jainas at Pāṭaliputtiram and built a temple for Śiva at Tiruvadi called *Guṇadaraviṅṇacaram* near the Jaina city of Pāṭaliputtiram (verse 146), we have to expect in the king a mettle totally different from what he reveals himself to be in his writings. How can an architect and a builder of art be an iconoclast also? If indeed he was the persecutor of other faiths as the *Periya-purāṇam*, a work of the 12th century, represents him to be, why should he have not treated the Buddhists similarly. The king's dislike of the Buddhists' ways are manifest in his writings. Beyond satirically ridiculing them he does not appear to have persecuted them or destroyed their *saṅghārāmas*, for, if he had done so, on the analogy of what he is said to have done to the Jaina monasteries at Pāṭaliputtiram, we could not expect to hear Hiuen Tsiang telling us in 640 A. D. with evident gratification, that in Kāñcīpuram, the Pallava capital, "there are some 100 *saṅghārāmas* and 10,000 priests.... There are some 80 *Deva* temples and many heretics called *Nirgranthas*."² One who destroys the Jaina relics at Pāṭaliputtiram suffers Buddhist *saṅghārāmas* and the Buddhist *saṅgha* to grow in his very capital under his very nose, especially when he has manifested his disapproval of the Buddhist conduct and life in the *Bhagavadajjuka* and the *Mattavilāsa* in the manner we have already seen. This is surely an irreconcilable conclusion. Also the Chinese pilgrim's account speaks of several

1. *A. S. I.*, Annual Report, 1906-07, p. 235.

2. *Beal*, Vol. II, p. 229.

Jainas (*Nirgranthas*) as occupying Kāñcīpuram. Why has the royal persecutor spared them and why has he allowed their number to increase at the capital city?

Examining the verse itself in the *Periya-purāṇam*, we find that the persecutor is referred to as a "Kāḍava" and as a "Pallava" also. The term "Kāḍava" is equivalent to *Kāḍuvaṭṭi*, *Kāḍvaṭṭi* and *Kāḍupaṭṭi* as proved by certain inscriptions.¹ We find this term in vogue in the country as late as 1300 A.D. denoting certain chiefs. In the time of the Coḷa King Vikrama Coḷa (1118-1135 A. D.) there was a chief of Giñjee in the South Arcot District, where also Tiruvadi is situated, who called himself a "Kāḍava."² Kōpperuñjiṅga, a mighty chief, who plagued Rājārāja III to a great extent and even imprisoned him (1243 A. D.) called himself a "Kāḍava" and a Pallava.³ Can we not suppose that Kōpperuñjiṅga ruling from Śēndamaṅgalam in South Arcot District, and the chief ruling from Giñjee, also in the same district during the reign of Vikrama Coḷa, were the descendants of a line of *Kāḍavas*, the feudatories of the Pallavas. They were probably the descendants of the *Kāḍava* who, according to Venkayya, was a Pallava feudatory and the ruler of Tiruvadi, also in the South Arcot District. The work of destruction of the Jaina monasteries at Pāṭaliputtiram near by attested to in the *Periya-purāṇam* was perhaps the work of this over-zealous vassal of Mahendravarman I. That the Pallavas had feudatories is proved by the ~~Siyamaṅgalam~~ ^{Vallam} inscription which speaks of a Skandasena, the son of Vasanta-priya-rāja, who was a feudatory of Mahendravarman I. The Tiruvadi ruler was perhaps another.

Mr. K. V. Subrahmanya Ayyar speaks of a third feudatory in the preface to *S. I. I.* Vol. VI. According to him two inscriptions in the Kapoteśvara temple at Chezerla, Guntur District (Nos. 594 and 595) are important, for they have "revealed the fact that the Pallava King Mahendravikramavarman who is there called also by his titles *Avanibhājana* and *Vegavati-sanātha*"

1. *E. I.*, Vol. VII, p. 25.

2. *I. A.*, Vol. XXII, p. 143.

3. *E. I.*, Vol. VII, pp. 164 & 167.

4. It is difficult to understand how Mr. K. V. S. Ayyar takes *vegavatisanātha* to be a title of the King. The term *sanātha* can never convey the idea of a 'lord' if that is what he means. It means 'occupied by, possessed by, endowed with, possessed of, possessing, having' and hence can only refer to the city of Kāñcī, which is endowed with the Vegavati, i.e., where the river flows.

had a feudatory in the grandson of king Kandara of the *Ānandagotra* through his daughter". While the statement of Mr. K. V. Subrahmanya Ayyar will be welcomed by all students of Pallava history and will be particularly useful to us in our hunt for Pallava feudatories, we regret to state that on examining the inscriptions on which Mr. Ayyar relies for his theory we find there is not a scrap of evidence to point as Mr. Ayyar has suggested. The inscription of the Kandara king, the grandson of king Kandara through his daughter, speaks of certain gifts such as temple utensils used in worship (bell, cymbals, parasol, etc.) made by the king for the temple. It also speaks of the strengthening (probably repairs) of many temples by the same king. The other record (No. 595) *i.e.*, that of Mahendra, speaks of certain gifts made by the Pallava king to 12 temple-architects for the restoration work in the temple that they attended to. We are unable to see in these two inscriptions any trace of any relationship between the Kandara king and Mahendra. Surely we cannot make anything capital out of the fact that these two records are found on a single slab, that of the Kandara in its front and that of Mahendra on its back.

We shall now turn to the *Mahāvamśa* for another feudatory of the Pallavas. Chapter XLVII speaks of Mānavamma, the friend of Narasimhavarman I who refers to a *Kāṇḍuveṭhi* (*Kāḍuveṭṭi*). Mānavamma is said in it to have gone over to India "and having made himself known to Narasimha, he entered his service and with much labour found favour in the sight of that king. And when he saw that the king's friendship was unfeigned, he brought his wife also to India and lived there with her, ministering to the king day and night, and another king, *Kāṇḍuveṭhi*, with whom also he had found favour gave him such possessions that it seemed as if the whole of that king's dominions had been granted to him". The last clause in the quotation not only introduces us to a *Kāṇḍuveṭhi*, *i.e.*, a *Kāḍuveṭṭi*, but also acquaints us with a significant information. If he allowed Mānavamma the possession of his own dominion which to the latter, who was moved by gratitude, appeared like the whole dominion of his, it was because his dominion was small. Surely such a comparison precludes the possibility of Narasimhavarman being intended. Can it be that Mānavamma's *Kāṇḍuveṭhi* was perhaps the *Kāḍava* ruler of Tiruvadi, the forerunner of the later *Kāḍavas*, such as the Giñjee ruler and Kōpperuñjīga, the ruler of Sēnda-

maṅgalam? If we admit this, it is obvious that the *Periya-purāṇam* account centres round a later Pallava feudatory who was contemporaneous with Narasiṁha and probably too with Rājasīṁha (Narasiṁhavarman II). If he was indeed a contemporary of Narasiṁhavarman and also of Rājasīṁha, we have to take it that he was a younger contemporary of the former, a point that may receive strength from the following fact:—

The royal persecutor is said to have built at Tiruvadi the *Guṇadaraviṅṇa*. Where is this temple and what are its architectural characteristics? The present Śiva temple, which is Pallava in style, is probably the temple referred to. On examination one is surprised to find that it is not in the “Mahendra Style”; it is not a rock-cut cave. On the other hand, it resembles in every respect the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñcīpuram attributed to Rājasīṁha (690 A. D.). Dr. Dubreuil has summed up the temple features as follows:—

“.....the vimāna of this temple strangely resembles that of Kailāsanātha at Kāñcīpuram. The plans of the two temples are alike; the vimāna at Tiruvadi is surrounded by collateral niches. The rearing lions are in profusion. ... the shrine contained a prismatic *liṅgam* and an image of Somāskanda”¹.

Are the above details not sufficient to prove that the royal artist Mahendravarman shared not a bit “of the persecuting zeal of a new convert”, that he was no convert and that, if he was indeed one, he was a convert to the *Muses*, poetry, literature, in short a convert to ART.

1. G. J. Dubreuil, *Pallava Antiquities*, Vol. I, p. 72.